

THE HELPER





BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

THE GIFT OF

SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
OF LONDON, ENGLAND









RAPHAEL'S 'SISTINE MADONNA'  
(See p. 61).

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A Handbook for Sunday School Teachers  
and Parents

EDITED BY THE REV.

W. G. TARRANT, B.A.

"That ye might be fellow helpers in the truth."—1 John 2:18.

London

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
ESSEX HALL, EGG STREET, STRAND, W.C.

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*Hearken unto me, ye holy children,  
And bud forth as a rose growing by a brook of water :  
And give ye a sweet savour of frankincense,  
And put forth flowers as a lily, . . . .  
And sing a Song of Praise.*

—ECCLESIASTICUS xxxix. 13, 14.

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# The Helper

## Concerning Eyes.

### A TALK WITH MY FELLOW-TEACHERS.

VER the edge of my desk, as I sit down this misty autumn day to talk with you, I see bright eyes looking at me, straight, not to be avoided,—looking at me as they look at you sometimes. Perhaps you are not afraid of them ; I think I am not exactly afraid, but—you know the kind of feeling. I stand sometimes before a whole battery of them at the Infant School which I help to ‘manage.’ Think of five hundred pairs of eyes levelled at one, differing in tint from the blue of the Saxon to the elfish black of the Jew, but all equally unerring in their searching aim ! One is not afraid, I say ; but long after we have ceased to be subject to ‘platform fright,’ is there not something a little awful when you feel the children looking at you, row after row of them, looking with all their ‘faces’—as my friend’s little boy said *he* looked ?

Five hundred, I say ; ranging from the ‘babies’ (as we call them) who can hardly talk, to the hardy veterans of

seven or eight who are going up into the ‘big boys’ or ‘big girls’ department next term. There stands another battalion of eye-artillery in each of those departments ; but, somehow, their fire is a little, very little, less deadly. They have got so much more to attend to inside themselves that their look loses just a little of that first, unabashed, round-eyed wonder and expectation and unhesitating judgment. And yet there are keen marksmen enough among them. Woe be to any pretentious fellow that comes within range. Even up to young manhood and womanhood human nature is armed with so much unsuspiciousness that it is merciless when it does find out a sham. After that stage, people are apt to grow doubtful of many things, and even of themselves and their powers of discernment ; and they ‘make-believe’ a great deal more than they did in earlier years,—the pity is they don’t know it so well when they are grown up.

But your present business and mine is with those young sharp-shooters I spoke of. I see their serried ranks, I say, just beginning at the edge of the desk, and stretching away through the

three kingdoms and the principality into thousands and thousands. How many of them are there? Mr. Pritchard can tell us—within a margin—how many Sunday scholars there are who *might possibly* have a shot at me and my book. I would take my chance with all, but I know that not all will have their chance, because you, my dear fellow-teachers, won't let them. Of course, if you think the things provided here by my brothers and sisters, comrades all in this good work, are not 'helpful'—so be it. The Onesimus who belies his name badly wants converting. (See Epistle to *Philemon*.) On the other hand, on the mere supposition that the men and women of experience, talent, and love—which in Sunday-school work is genius—have really brought forth 'treasures new and old' for the benefit of those children of yours, beware of the eyes that are levelled at *you*.

For, to speak confidentially, as I hope I may, I and my company are not in range of their fire, except as you bring us there. But you *are*, and you have been, and you are still going to be. I am thinking of those bright eyes as they are, bright and clear, and yet not wholly strangers to clouds as the perplexing things of life—troubles, ignorances, sins, and passions,—come over the young minds that look out of them. They gather round you, week by week, my friend, in your distant city, town, village,—looking up,' as *Lycidas* says, and if they are 'not fed,' as the poem puts it—well, read the

poem. And a greater poet than Milton said, 'See that ye despise not one of these little ones, for in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father'—and what the angels' eyes see in that face when *His* little ones are treated ill is a thought to pierce the heart.

As I look over the edge, there, I am trying to see past this next ten years, and to find their faces then; to see whether the eyes are as innocent, whether they are fuller of intelligence, still happy, nay happier; to see what sort of flower the bud is making. Twenty, forty years, I look on; and what are they like now? Citizens of the nation that is to be—what part do they take? *Beyond that*—what of them?

Well, what can we really do, you and I, with these dear (sometime troublesome and always lively, I hope, and always dear) boys and girls of ours? Not much, eh? After all, we see but a little of them, even if we have classes or guilds for them, and visit their homes. And other influences than ours multiply around them. What can we *really* do, putting aside all that 'make-believe' of which I spoke? Well, 'really and truly,' as a twinkling tot says to me sometimes, I believe we can do much. The pointsman can't stop the train, but he can give the warning signal; with a knowing switch he can direct it on to the proper rails. You and I are pointsmen, only pointsmen; and if the driver will go past the signal-post when the danger sign is

up, it is not our fault, though it must be our grief. But it is our fault and our shame if, being placed in a unique position of control, we forget our duties, neglect our chances, unskillfully handle our tools, and so let the life rush on to loss and disaster.

Does the illustration seem to give too much power to the Sunday-school teacher? I think not,—considering how closely personal his relationships with his scholars may become. But as my friend, every teacher's friend, Mr. Thos. Robinson, would tell us, nature has abundant illustrations of the way in which slightest mechanisms lead to great results. What more silky fine and feeble than the filaments that form the parachute of the thistle-seed: but they are enough to take the wind into harness and make it the servant of the life of the plant. What less obtrusive than the curl of the hooklet on the fruit of 'cleavers'—but by their aid it 'cleaves,' and so another set of seeds go down the lanes and across the fields to make starry chains of loveliness for next spring. Fifty-two gossamer threads of love spun Sunday by Sunday round your scholars will carry them far; and if you turn the hooks of their interest, attention, and affection right they will 'cleave' to some purpose, be sure.

Now, having settled it in our minds that our work is about as precious as anything in the world (with apologies to Mr. Frank Talbot—he won't quarrel with me!) and, further, being quite

convinced that if we do not attend to it, those bright eyes will get dull or worse before long, I want to say a few general words about the materials in my volume. I don't wish to speak much in praise of individual sections—first, because it would be difficult to leave off without reproducing, 'with notes,' the whole of the table of contents; and, secondly (which is the more important), because you will have your own opinion when all is said and done. Have it! Only let it be an opinion worth while having.

Are you in want of something suggestive for the very little ones? Have you a pair or more of explosive young mortals in the home circle who 'take after somebody,' and you don't know who, and do you want to settle them down a bit? Are you just a little in a fog yourself as to the Bible and our distinctive religious principles? Do you like looking at pretty things, and looking for marvellous things, by yourself (but not for yourself) or along with the children? Is it a story, or a carol, or quiet serious talk you want? Did you come to London to the 'Twentieth Century Meetings'—surely the best thing in their way that we have ever had, or are likely to have—and do you wish to be caught up again into the third heaven and hear the great inspiring words again which it was not unlawful for a man—or a woman—to utter? Is your eye fixed on the future of our churches, and do you want to get your forces into line, from school to church, and all to throb with the full

healthy pulse of Christian endeavour? In short, do you want provoking unto good works of any kind, with and for your young people?

The expected sequel of all these questions, I know, is—‘Then buy this book;’ but don’t you see *that*, besides being a suspiciously commercial looking bit of advice, is ‘really and truly’ a little off the mark. If you hadn’t got the book already in your hands you would not be reading what I respectfully submit to you. I suppose, therefore, you *have* bought it. And what I did wish to say was—‘*Use* this book.’ I don’t mean this one alone, of course. I have told Mr. Secretary, long since, that I believe there are stores of wisdom in the old volumes that are ample for the needs of anyone who will only use them. He agrees, but takes me at a disadvantage by telling me that pressed violets, though precious and fragrant still, are not the same as the flowers that bloom afresh in May time. That is his way, and I confess I am partly of his opinion. But if our annual has any worth or beauty, I beseech you, my fellow-teachers, wear it

well. These pages so fair and every-way admirable—well, are they *not*?—ought to go on to their due destiny, and get well-thumbed. A *HELPER* twelvemonths old, and not honourably soiled by many a contact with fingers big or little, and improved by touches of the teacher’s or parent’s pencil, is a grief to think upon. One might as well keep a rosy romp of a child in the starched bondage of immaculate pinafores. Be *helped*, I beg you. Look through the book, again and again. Put notes in the margin, if you like; it is wide. If the book is a kind of flower, get the essence out as they do attar of roses,—by steady absorption of the aroma of the leaves, till all the possible good is yours.

And so, linking hands thus, all of us who, as Mr. Blatchford says, have no need of self-depreciation at all, for we love our work and are ‘able’ in our love, and by God’s love, to do it, let us cheer each other on, year by year, till we no longer see each other—and all the rest—as in a mirror darkly, but face to face.

W. G. TARRANT.



# FOR THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

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AMONG the Whitsuntide Meetings held at Essex Hall in the opening year of the Twentieth Century, those devoted to Sunday Schools were conspicuous, not only as coming among the earliest in point of time, but in striking the keynote of success. The assembling of representatives from all parts of the United Kingdom, though not unprecedented in character, surpassed all records in numbers; and the special facilities offered by the London Committee to visitors from country schools and churches induced a great many to be present upon an occasion which will be long memorable. But it was undoubtedly the presence of representatives of the Unitarian and Liberal Christian faith from other countries that imparted an interest unique in kind and degree. Of the addresses given at the 'International Council' of Unitarians a record is preserved in a special volume; we have felt it our duty, as it is a privilege, to present to readers some of those which were given specially in connection with Sunday-school work. While those who heard them will be glad to renew their impressions, those who did not will benefit by reading them, and in extending their influence to others.—EDITOR.

## Retrospect.

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N looking back over the history of Sunday schools in this country, one becomes sensible of the vital necessity out of which they sprang. At the time when Raikes and his coadjutors set to work to establish them, the children of the masses were, to a large extent, outside alike from religion and culture. They were poor little drudges all the week, going to work for long hours, fourteen or so every day, at about seven years of age, when such labour was inhuman, and on Sunday

spending their one day of leisure in noisy gangs, riotous ragamuffins, learning nothing that was good, and everything that was bad. This was an education of little barbarians. No wonder that gaols were full, even the monstrous cruelty of the laws, with their constant penalty of death, doing little to diminish the crime born of brutal ignorance.

Schools for the children of the masses were practically non-existent; and the grammar schools, that did exist, with their classical curriculum, were for the few, their endowments being no help to the many. Indeed, had they been suitable to them, the pressure of ton-

from early morning till evening would have made their attendance impossible. Moreover, in those unenlightened days of caste legislation and caste prejudice, education was not held to be a thing for the common people; they might know too much, they might learn too much about their outraged rights and the liberties denied them; so darkness reigned supreme.

And the first ray of light shed upon the gloom came with the Sunday-school movement. Here or there, single schools had previously sprung into existence, like Cardinal Borromeo's in Italy, in the sixteenth century; or like Theophilus Lindsey's and Mrs. Cappe's, in 1763. But the real inception of the Sunday-school system was undoubtedly due to the joint influence of two men—Robert Raikes and the Rev. Thomas Stock, at Gloucester, in 1780. Raikes, a printer and journalist, had been engaged in philanthropic work in the prisons, and was full of a sense of the awful evils resulting from the ignorance and irreligion in which masses of the children were reared; and he writes, in a letter in 1783, of his first taking up Sunday-school work, as follows: ‘The beginning of the scheme was entirely owing to accident. Some business leading me one morning into the suburbs of the city, where the lowest part of the people reside, I was struck with concern at seeing a group of children, wretchedly ragged, at play in the streets. I asked an inhabitant whether those children belonged to that part of the town, and lamented

their misery and idleness. “Ah! sir,” said the woman, “could you take a view of this part of the town on a Sunday, you would be shocked, indeed; for then the street is filled with a multitude of these wretches, who, released that day from employment, spend their time in noise and riot, playing at ‘chuck,’ and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid as to convey an idea of hell rather than any other place. On the Sabbath day, they are given up to follow their own inclinations without restraint, as their parents, totally abandoned themselves, have no idea of instilling into the minds of their children principles to which they themselves are entire strangers.” ‘This conversation,’ he added, ‘suggested to me that it would be at least a harmless attempt, if it were productive of no good, should some little plan be formed to check the deplorable profanation of the sabbath.’

The ‘little plan’ was the Sunday-school movement. With the help of Mr. Stock, he took it up, in the first instance, as a sort of forlorn hope of reforming the lives of the poor lost children of the people, left to utter neglect. The movement spread with wonderful rapidity. It began within the Church of England. To turn the children into clean, decent, well-mannered, orderly members of society, was the first object; joined with it was the aim to make them church-goers, to teach them to read the Bible and to say the catechism. But in order to do this, lessons in reading and in spelling were essential.

When William Fox organized the first Sunday School Society, in 1785, the character of the work may be seen from the fact that, in ten years, it had distributed 92,000 spelling books, 24,000 Testaments, and 15,000 Bibles. So the first thing done in the Sunday schools was teaching the children to read, with a special view to Bible reading, and with a good deal of catechism and church attendance added.

In the beginning of the movement, teachers were almost invariably paid. They were often women who had kept dame schools for a few children. Payment varied from one shilling to two shillings a Sunday. The hours were long, sometimes, with church attendance, two-and-a-half in the morning and two-and-a-half in the afternoon. But before Mr. Raikes's death, in 1810, owing to difficulty in finding the money, teaching became largely voluntary and unpaid; and in Mr. Raikes and men of his stamp there was a genuine devotion to the work of lifting up the children's lives. Raikes visited them in their homes, and made himself their friend, and set the example of a true Sunday-school worker,—the first among many who have won young lives for God and Christ and duty. Although the movement had emanated from the Church of England, it soon became general. John Wesley took it up warmly, and all Nonconformists joined in it.

Testimony was borne to the great services it rendered.

Among others, Adam Smith wrote : 'No plan has promised to effect a

change of manners with equal ease and simplicity since the days of the Apostles.' Cowper said he knew no nobler means by which a reformation of the lower classes could be effected.

John Wesley wrote, in 1784: 'I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?' And writing in 1787, he said : 'These schools will be one means of reviving religion throughout the kingdom,' and in 1788, he wrote: 'I verily think these schools are one of the noblest specimens of charity which have been set on foot since the time of William the Conqueror.'

The system advanced by leaps and bounds. In 1788, Dr. Glasse, a friend of Raikes, said there were 250,000 children in Sunday schools; in 1789, Dr. Shute, bishop of Salisbury, gave the number at 300,000—the first-fruits of the millions of Sunday scholars in our day, practically including the immense majority of working class children, with the great army of adults for whom not the least important work is done, on Sundays and week evenings, in classes and social gatherings.

None took up Sunday schools more earnestly than our own forefathers throughout the length and breadth of the land. The fact that some of our schools have recently had centenaries is a proof of their early association with the Sunday-school movement. And it was their marked feature that

they saw the need and the wisdom, even more than others, of using the precious Sunday leisure and the week evenings to give the elements of education.

Until the Education Act, in 1870, it remained true that many of the children in the Sunday schools came without any knowledge of reading, or writing, or arithmetic, and our schools always took the lead in supplying this. In the earlier days, when there was no other opportunity for the young of the working classes to obtain any culture, what could be a better Sunday occupation than instructing them in the only means of all knowledge ? In our schools the line has never been sharply drawn between religious and secular teaching. The religious influence of the teacher has not depended, in our opinion, upon what he has taught, so much as on what he has been, on his character, on his spirit, on his devotion to his work, on his interest in his scholars, on his friendship for them, on the example he set them, on the Christian love that made him give up his one day of leisure to serve with all his heart and soul, and mind and strength, his neighbours' children. I hold that such men and women, true as steel, humble, genuine, loving, simple-minded servants of Christ, have done a religious work in teaching boys and girls to spell, or make pot-hooks, or add, or subtract. Their religion has breathed in their lives, and they have touched their scholars' hearts with a life-long influence. How many of those who were their scholars have said not alone

that they have had their first start in life, and had their 'hand up,' from the work of such teachers, often to positions of honour and usefulness, but have said also that they have gained from them far more than knowledge—the inspiration that streams from noble character and Christian love.

I can see, as I speak to you to-day, in my mind's-eye, many and many a man and woman, often of humble origin, who have done, without knowing it, a grand and beautiful religious work just by the influence of their lives upon the scholars. Whatever else has been done for the good of mankind in Sunday schools, most has been done by the direct personal influence of loving Christian souls, who have been the friends and companions and counsellors of their scholars. Alike religious truth and intellectual culture pale into insignificance by the side of this. It was this magic power of personal inspiration that was the gift of one who, under God's blessing, touched my boyhood, and the boyhood of untold numbers,—Travers Madge. His Sunday-school work was *the work*; and in my retrospect of the Sunday school, through half a century of acquaintance with it, I hold that everywhere, in all schools, systems and methods and subjects of instruction are the small dust of the balance compared with the real thing : and the real thing, the root of the matter, is a spirit like Travers Madge's, which is a spirit like Christ's.

Yet, we have recognised in the last part of the nineteenth century, that

there has been laid on Sunday schools a different work from the old one, which brought scholars, especially to our own schools, for the elements of learning. They do not come for them any longer. And we have of late been called upon to devote ourselves more exclusively to all that contributes to the higher culture of the mind and soul—a culture to be found in acquaintance with Truth in Nature, and in Humanity, and in God.

And there is the more need for us to recognise this call, that one of the signs of the times has of late been a tendency to take things easily in our schools, seen alike in teachers and scholars, and to place relaxation before high culture, and before effort of mind and spirit to rise to higher life. It is part of the spirit of an age given to luxury and pleasure. We have not, I fear, the grit of our fathers. We must gird up the loins of our mind afresh.

We have had a splendid lead from this Association, in the abundant literature with which it has supplied us; but which I acknowledge that we have not used as we should. And a special need in our schools has been the taking up, with greater interest and zeal and real application, the teaching of the Bible in the light of modern thought, fearless, free, and yet devout,—bringing out more than ever the intrinsic beauty and power and inspiration to be found in it, and dissipating the unreal superstitions that have obscured its meaning. In the closing decades of the last century much has been done by this

Association to provide teachers with the means of giving this instruction ; and a great want of our schools is more teachers to undertake the task of conveying it, with power to interest their scholars in its reception. It is not a question of doctrine. We are not in need of more dogmatic teaching; but we are in need of more inspiration drawn from the living sources of our religion in the Old and New Testaments, with the new light now thrown upon them. I have found a tendency in our schools, difficult to overcome, to care little for anything in the past; to take interest only in the present day; to regard the Bible as a book out of touch with it. We need a revival of interest in the origin, not of something which concerns us not, but of our own religion.

And there is nothing which, in my retrospect, I find more demanding all the thought we can give it, than the question,—How to make our schools more truly religious in this respect, especially in bringing to the children's hearts and minds the living relation of Jesus of Nazareth to the life and thought of to-day. If personal influence is the life and breath of all the best work done in our schools, we want to make the scholars feel that the very life of the Christian religion is found in the personal influence of Jesus; that the knowledge of him is not out of date ; but that to know him as he was, and to come under his living touch, is the most vital need of their moral and spiritual lives.

H. ENFIELD DOWSON.

## The Sunday School's Unique Task.

**T**N my judgment, though Sunday-school work was never more difficult, yet Sunday-school work was never more needed, and Sunday schools on the whole were never doing more real good than at the present time.

Sunday-school work was never more difficult, mainly because it has been called upon to move up, so to speak, to higher duties, and also because life itself has become more many-sided and complex. In its earlier days, the Sunday school necessarily worked, as it were, in the lower or middle storeys of young human nature, giving it skill of hand (in writing) and retentiveness of memory (in arithmetic and a few texts), with the finer use of its *vocal organs* in reading and singing. The earlier Sunday school did more than this. But these were its main objects—these were its burden and emphasis. The teaching of these very simple arts of hand, and voice, and memory, took up most of its time.

But see now what the Sunday school has risen or is slowly rising to, to-day! Its main work now is to teach—what? *The Art of Life*,—the art—the noblest of all arts—the Art of Right Living.

That is a most difficult art. It is difficult to learn. It is more difficult to teach. And there is more in it than seems,—more than I have time to illustrate. It involves the art of right

living within one's self; the art of right living in relation to others; the art of right living in relation to society, to our country, and to Nature, and the art of right living in relation to God.

This art is Religion, and those who try to teach it in Sunday schools know that it is not easy. Nothing is easy which has to deal with and develop the higher faculties of human nature. Yet there our work is. And for this reason, I say, it was never more difficult than to-day.

But it was never more needed. Just consider! Think of the men and women you know who, not without intelligence and not without goodness, have given way, whether much or little, either to foolishness or knavery. They are a great grief to you and others, and perhaps, at times, to themselves. And what is the matter with them, as a rule? There's a moral screw loose somewhere. They have never learnt the most needful art of all,—*the art of life*.

Look, now, at the actual boys or girls in your class on a Sunday. There are physical forces in them as potential as a dynamo. There are moral forces in them as dangerous as dynamite, and yet as good for good purposes.

But do those boys and girls sufficiently understand the art of managing, the art of making the highest use of, those physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual forces which are within them and around them? And yet is it not supremely important that they should?

They are out, let us say, upon the

open sea of life, and the art of ordinary navigation is almost child's play in comparison with this moral and spiritual navigation which we call the art of right living, whereby character is saved from wreck, and the ship of the soul, with all its celestial cargo, is steered right well from the port of birth to the port of death,—even to the heavenly haven.

And the Sunday school was never teaching this art better than it is to-day. Yes, I know! You could tell me another tale? Well, I am old enough and young enough to be able to make comparisons. And you will note that the word I used was comparative. I should not feel honest if I said the Sunday school of to day was doing its best. But I incline to believe that, take it all in all, the Sunday school was never, since it began, doing more real good. And for this very reason, that the Sunday school was never more alive to the need for cultivating the characters of young people. A good teacher, nowadays, feels that he is not making the best use of his time with his class, if the lesson he gives has not some bearing upon actual life. The art of right living—in one word Religion, as we understand it—and especially Religion applied—is more taught amongst us, and in all kinds of Sunday schools, than ever within my knowledge. All over the country I have come into contact with earnest teachers who long and pray for more power to touch the spiritual life of their scholars.

The sense of God, of His good laws; of obedience to these and responsibility to Him, of the joy of duty, the loveliness of goodness, the charm of Christlikeness,—these make up the art and motive-power of right living, and the love and practice of these is the one thing for which our best teachers now supremely care.

More and more we are all realizing the old yet ever new divine law, that only by our minds and hearts and souls is any intellectual, moral, or spiritual product, in the shape of character and goodness, ever produced, whatever means we use;—that, in short, it always takes a mind to develop a mind, a heart to educate a heart, a soul to unfold a soul.

And that, friends, is the Sunday school's unique work to-day. And it always was since Sunday schools began! Yea, *they* taught writing and arithmetic in those earlier days, but, unconsciously, if not consciously, those old teachers taught something else. They taught the good life by living the good life, while all the time they thought they were only teaching writing and arithmetic. For character is of all things most contagious. And just because there is in our Sunday schools to-day this contagion of character at work, together with the added power of an emphasis upon real life and good life as never obtained previously, that I believe Sunday-school work, though never moré difficult, was never more needed, and never more effective.

But—but—Sunday schools are not yet at their best. They are not the best they might be now! They will rise nearer to that best next Sunday if all of us here carry away the feeling, which ought to be an inspiration, that to teach this noblest of all arts—the art of right living—is a calling high indeed. As Browning says through Lippo Lippi—

Art was given for that :  
God uses us to help each other so,  
Lending our minds out.

J. J. WRIGHT.

#### SPEAK TO THE HEART.

God scatters love on every side  
Freely among his children all,  
And always hearts are lying open wide,  
Wherein some grains may fall.  
  
There is no wind but soweth seeds  
Of a more true and open life,  
Which burst, unlooked for, into high-  
souled deeds,  
With wayside beauty rife.

We find within these souls of ours  
Some wild germs of a higher birth,  
Which in the poet's tropic heart bear flowers  
Whose fragrance fills the earth.

It may be glorious to write  
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three  
High souls, like those far-stars that come  
in sight

Once in a century ;—

But better far it is to speak  
One simple word, which now and then  
Shall waken their free nature in the weak  
And friendless sons of men.

He who doth this, in verse or prose,  
May be forgotten in his day,  
But surely shall be crowned at last with  
those

Who live and speak for aye.

J. R. LOWELL.

## Outlook.

### I.



HERE is one disconcerting feature in the statistical table published in this year's Annual Report which should give us pause and make us consider whether some change of tone or method is not necessary in the future if we would maintain our honourable record. While four fewer schools have sent in returns as compared with last year, the number of teachers shows a decrease of 143 and of scholars 1,226. Of the scholars whose names have disappeared from our rolls no fewer than 839 are over sixteen years of age. We may allow for some proper purging of the roll and for some uncertainty as to the correctness of the figures which is admitted in one of the districts. But this falling-off in the attendance is not an isolated fact. Nearly every religious body (I know of no exception) has the same story to tell and the same loss of numbers to deplore. What makes the tendency to fall away so significant is the fact that it is the elder scholars especially whose ranks are being thinned. In our own Association every district reports a diminution except Yorkshire, which is to be congratulated on making progress instead.

What is the meaning of this falling away of the elder scholars? Tendencies of the age we live in have something to do with it, no doubt. The better

educational facilities for the young, perhaps, have even more influence in diverting the current. But is there not another reason which we need to recognize frankly, and a corresponding call to us at the opening of the New Century to set our house in order and make our schools *too attractive to be forsaken?*

The fact is, we have not moved with the times in our Sunday-school teaching and methods. There are exceptions to this generalisation, but it is true in the main. The old days were honourable indeed, and the schools were well served and administered for the peculiar needs of the time. But the new age requires new machinery and different kind of teaching. If we do not realize this betimes, and adapt our agency accordingly, we shall be left stranded and have none but ourselves to blame.

Here is an invaluable institution to our hand, with a splendid goodwill attached to it. It is a powerful 'going concern,' with a machinery complicated and efficient, which it would take many weary years of toil to replace if it should be destroyed for lack of a clear purpose and shrewd business capacity. Here is a unique opportunity for the last century's faithful work to be made the basis for still more efficient work in the dawning age. The needs of young life have changed, but they are equally great. We only want a little wise craftsmanship to adapt the valuable machinery to its new task, and then all the self-sacrificing labours of the

past will be shown to have prepared the way for better things than our fathers dreamed of.

What is the root idea of the Sunday school? Surely this has been *the Church's way of influencing the young for good.* In the elder days the first duty seemed very properly to be to give an elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic. That was regarded in the circumstances as a religious work; and indeed, I think it was. There are still many among us who bear an honoured name and fill a worthy part who owe their education almost entirely to the Sunday school. Within my experience the nature of the instruction in Sunday schools has completely changed. Thanks chiefly to the Education Acts, the need for such rudimentary teaching has gone. Then came the era of catechisms, which also, I am glad to say, has with slight exceptions passed away. Now our teaching is of a very miscellaneous order, largely left to the discretion of the individual teacher, who gets, or takes, little guidance from more experienced minds. Probably the best influence of the Sunday-school teacher to-day is the personal sympathy between him or her and the individual scholar. That influence is most precious, and often has lasting effect for good; but, after all, we ought to have something more than that to show for our labours.

May I suggest four directions in which some improvement in Sunday schools is needed?

(1) We want *more system* in the arrangement of our lessons, from the class of infants up to the adults. When the genius has arisen who shall prepare—and persuade our teachers to adopt and faithfully study—a satisfactory scheme of graduated lessons through which each scholar shall pass as he moves up in the school, there will be a new breathing of the spirit into our schools, and a sevenfold blessing will descend on our work. As it is, much most valuable energy is wasted because there is no continuity or connection between the teaching of one class and another.

(2) The teaching and methods of our schools need to be *brought into closer touch with daily life*. The whole scope of our work wants broadening. Nothing should be shut out that can be made to serve the great cause we have at heart. Every field of knowledge is fragrant with flowers that will sweeten life. No sharp dividing line must be drawn between the sacred and the secular in a world where God is everywhere present. And the young should be taught, in the name of religion, to take a vital interest in the concerns that affect the welfare of the community and the questions that go to the roots of daily life.

(3) The whole atmosphere of the Sunday school should be *religious*. Everything said or done in it should be with a view to the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom on earth. This is not to say that all must be solemnity and psalm-singing—far from

it. ‘The glorious gospel of the blessed God’ is ‘glad tidings of great joy which shall be for all people.’ Those who enter most fully into the reality of religion are the happiest people in the world, and their lives are the best psalm they sing. The Sunday school should make the very youngest feel the joyfulness of religion, and establish its hold on every department of their life, so that the thought of God and the sense of Duty may never forsake them. Every institution should thrill with the sense of unity of purpose for which the whole school stands, and, in its play as well as in its work, feel that it has God’s blessing.

(4) Along with the most positive teaching of what is believed to be helpful truth, should go the desire to *develop the independent life* of the scholars. They must be encouraged to think for themselves, not to be mere receivers of the thoughts of others and mechanical reproducers of the work of others. This sense of independence should be gently fostered, not taught to run before it is able to walk warily; but always in the teacher’s mind there should be the great aim of getting each scholar to adapt himself to his own mental environment and establish a personal relationship with truth.

Let me sketch in brief what my dream of the Sunday school of the twentieth century is.

(a) It will lay the chief emphasis on *personal character* and conduct. All else is subservient and secondary to

this. Creed is important as a factor in life, and is valuable when it is well-founded; but what we *believe* is as nothing compared with what we *are* in ourselves. Rites and forms of worship are excellent when they are reasonably conceived, correspond to some inner want of our nature, and are treated as aids and expressions of faith and no more; but the strictest religious observance is worse than useless if it goes no deeper than the surface of our life: it may even be a shelter for hypocrisy or self-deception. We cannot make the young life of this generation too clearly understand that personality is the greatest gift of God to man; that there is nothing which a man should give in exchange for his soul; and that the truest riches of all are to be found in an upright and generous character, kindly towards men and honest before God. The Sunday school to meet the needs of our time will lay most stress on character, and show that this is the central fact of religion.

(b) But it will lead the learner to realize the consecration of spirit which comes with the sense of *God's immanence and direct relationship* to every individual soul. The thought of God is the most solemn and the most enlightening of all truths; for it shows us our utter dependence on Him at every turn and His constant care for us and for His whole creation, which is knit together by intimate bonds. Let but the thought of God take root in the heart, and the whole nature is up-

lifted and clarified. Difficult problems are solved, and those which have not yet become clear cease to disturb and worry us, because we have found a refuge in the Everlasting Arms and abide there in peace and trust. With the sense of God's presence about us we can never feel lonely, even though friends should pass away or forsake us and the world prove harsh. Where should this truth so fittingly be presented to the dawning intelligence as in the Sunday school, which seeks to make the young life of the world throb with the sense of its personal touch with the Infinite Spirit behind and within all things?

(c) Following in natural sequence on this line of thought, the ideal Sunday school will impress on its pupils the *sacredness and dignity of the life* with which we are entrusted. How great is our privilege to live in a world so informing and rich with beauty and utility! How solemn the trust of free preferential power, by means of which, with an inward divine guidance as to the moral distinctions, we are made into the arbiters of our own fate, the creators of good or evil, the masters of our own nature! And how mysterious is this life, which no man can originate or restore, but which teems in incalculable abundance on every hand, climbing up through endless progressions, and evidently fitted for better things? Nor is it without reason that our powers are competent for much more than in this earthly existence they can find scope to achieve; for

life, like matter, however it may change its form, is indestructible, and the yearnings of our hearts and the reasonings of our minds find corroboration in the facts that beset us day by day.

(d) Living, then, under the eye of God, and with His inspirations ever in our hearts, realizing the importance of personal character and the significance of human life, the Sunday school of the twentieth century will take a leaf out of the book of the philanthropic zeal of the nineteenth, and teach to the rising generation the *claims and rights of other human souls* on our attention and love. The great lesson of the Brotherhood of Humanity will be pressed home with many fitting illustrations and in a hundred different ways. The sensitive nature of the young will be impressed with the kindred pains and pleasures, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears of others, and taught to give way when the interests of others can be served. They will be shown that we are all parts of one great fellowship, in which every member is dependent on every other, and that the supreme joy is to be found in sacrifice.

(e) *Distinctive theological teaching* will not be excluded from the ideal Sunday school; but, on the contrary, it will play a prominent part. For religious faith must clothe itself in some vesture, and theology is the mode of expressing our faith to ourselves and to the world. But the theological teaching of our schools must be rational, based on the eternal facts written in human nature,

and not dependent on outgrown speculations. Much, alas! will still have to be done in the way of destroying harmful superstitions, especially in view of the pernicious teaching, called 'religious,' in many of the day schools of this time; but the chief work will be that of building up a sensible and truthful scheme of thought which will stand the test of enquiry and criticism, and prove to be an adequate embodiment and protection of the religious spirit.

(f) *The Bible* will take a larger and still more important place than ever in the Sunday school of the future; for it has only recently been rediscovered (or shall I say discovered for the first time?) and interpreted in a reasonable and natural sense. The glamour and superstition associated with the venerable records have gone for ever, but from that very fact they speak with an impressiveness and a significance which for most people they never possessed before. Within them are treasures beyond price, fountains of living water springing up into everlasting life.

(g) The glorious *personality of Jesus* emerges from the pages of the New Testament as never before; and the Sunday school of this New Century will lay stress on the historical figure of the gracious Man of Nazareth, whose life and words have become the possession of humanity, the seal of its promise, the prophecy of its immortal destiny in union with the Divine. The great theological task of the churches in the first quarter of this century will be to

define their attitude to Jesus; and on this great subject our teachers must speak with no uncertain sound if our noble Unitarian traditions are not to be cast to the winds.

(h) *Science* will be treated as the handmaiden of God in the ideal Sunday school, and led cordially by the hand to take her due place beside the teacher's chair. No longer must the door be barred against her, but rather must she be welcomed, with some degree of penitence for the inhospitable treatment she has so long received. On the other hand, she should herself be made to understand that she must not attempt to usurp the province of a higher than herself, nor allow herself to be perverted to cruelty and unhallowed curiosity.

(i) *Social problems* will be frankly faced and faithfully discussed in the higher classes of the New Century Sunday school. We cannot afford to let the Debating Society and the Socialist Club and the Reform League take away our rightful office, though we too often run that risk to-day by neglecting an obvious duty. The subjects on which men are feeling most keenly and thinking most deeply are just the subjects on which Religion ought to speak her word to those who are entering on the world's work. If she is silent there, what wonder if ardent natures, burning with some sacred enthusiasm, turn away from a fraternity of the dead who take no interest in living things?

(j) And, lastly, the ideal Sunday

school, at which some of us are aiming, will deliberately make itself into *a training school for the church*. There will be no separation of interests between daughter and mother, as there too often is now. The church will realize its duty to the school: the school will be the children's church, an ante-chamber to the other. Preparation classes will be formed every year to lead the way into membership of the congregation, and a welcome will be held out to every young person who has deliberately entered into fellowship with the church.

Following on some such lines, it seems to me, the Sunday school will save itself from the reproach which at present seems to threaten it: it will stop the leakage of the elder scholars whom at a critical age it is most important to keep: it will give a new and living interest to the young in the things that touch their lives most nearly; and, with slightly altered direction, it will continue the noble history of its labours in directing the church's efforts for the good of the young life springing up within it. C. J. STREET.

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SPEAK to the children of thy country, of what she was and is, and ought to be. Repeat to them the names and deeds of the good men who have loved their country and the people, and who have striven to elevate their destiny. Instil into their young hearts the strength to resist injustice and oppression. Let them learn from thy lips how lovely is the path of virtue; how noble it is to become apostles of the truth; how holy to sacrifice themselves, if need be, for their fellows.—MAZZINI.

## Outlook.

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### II.

 FEW weeks ago I had the privilege of visiting the collection of pictures by Spanish artists now on loan at the Guildhall. In the first room, placed above the little gallery, I saw one picture that struck me with great interest, both for its own sake and because, as a sort of parable picture, it seemed to focus within itself some of the thoughts to which I wanted to give expression at our meeting to-day.<sup>1</sup>

The picture is called ‘The Chair of Philip II.’, the chair being a rough seat hewn out of the rocky summit of a high hill, overlooking the plain where stands the Escorial—palace and monastery. It was the habit of the King to go up this mount in order to overlook the great building then in course of erection; and the picture shows the King seated there while his minister, scroll in hand, reads an account of the progress of the work. Dark thundery clouds are gathered over the plain below; but above, the light is breaking through, bathing the hill-top with a soft and beautiful radiance.

Does not this picture suggest a parable for us, for are we not all concerned with the building of the ‘living temple of God’? Idle passers-by may, and often do, wonder at the trouble we are giving ourselves, and

even grumble at the dust and turmoil. ‘Why can’t you let the things alone?’ they cry; ‘the plain looked much better as it was.’ Well, perhaps if these idlers would allow themselves even to be carried (as was the King) up the mountain, even they might be able to discern, among the dust and seeming confusion, some signs that would at least show promise of a worthy edifice.

But, friends, we are not this morning concerned with the passers-by, but with ourselves, some of the lowly labourers striving to help in this heavenly building. Sometimes we grow dissatisfied; life is so short and our powers so feeble; the one tiny brick which we can hope to place is so unimportant; we strive and strive, and, after all, what a little building-up results! Shall we not lay down our tools and give up altogether?

Lay down our tools for a little while? Yes, perhaps; but give up, never! We are but a little tired, and need to be refreshed. So let us mount the high hill, and breathe the pure air; let us go in company, and in this ‘together-hood’ look down over our work, gathering counsel, encouragement, and hope from one another.

The dark cloud may be for the moment over our work, but above the light is breaking through and falling over the hill-top, which now in truth becomes for us a Mount of Transfiguration. May this week be thus symbolised in our hearts!

And further. It is good to go up

<sup>1</sup> May 28th, 1901.

aloft in order to see how our work fits in with its surrounding parts. For although, when occupied with our daily labours on the plain, we are able to note what lies just under our hand, yet it is only by mounting from time to time and looking upon the work *from above*, that we can see how our portion fits in with the rest and where it requires modification or remodelling.

And this is especially necessary for us, for we have a difficulty which King Philip had not. The king had the plan of the whole building spread before him, but no such finished design is in our hands. We are like children having a dictated drawing lesson, where the teacher gives them but one line at a time, and where, only by listening with great attention and by following out each instruction carefully, can the scholars hope to complete the pattern successfully. We can know nothing of the perfected plan of the Celestial Architect; but we can listen reverently to the inner voice which dictates the next line, and we can set ourselves obediently to carry it out; knowing, however, that if we do thus listen and obey, our corner of the edifice, small though it is, will yet set straight and true, and will fit into the eternal plan.

What, then, have we to learn from such an outlook as we have been able to take over the past century? Many things, of course; but I should like to lay stress upon three of these.

First, students of all branches of scientific thought, whether of philo-

sophy or natural science, are finding out and teaching us more clearly than ever that *everything is governed by law*; that the day will come when the word 'chance' will have no place in our language. Therefore we must strive to set our lives in harmony with these laws; we must learn ourselves, and we must teach our children, to be obedient to the divine *must*; mark, I say *divine* *must*; for the human *must* is oft-times the divine *must not!* and the saying 'Whatever a man sows that also shall he reap' will be recognized as words of veritable hope and of warning, too.

Second, noting the *divine patience* displayed in the working out of the Laws which govern the universe we shall strive also after that spirit of patience, through lack of which so much of our work in the past has been hasty, imperfect, and even mischievous.

And thirdly. The knowledge that the universe is governed by law, and that that law is beneficent, leads us to the ever-deepening conviction that Love and Wisdom are at the root of all things, and these are enshrined in our thoughts of God, our Heavenly Father.

This simple faith in God is uplifting, full of joy and cheer; and I hold that he who, while professing such belief yet persistently looks to the gloomy side of things, is untrue to his profession; for surely—as our friend, Mr. Horton, President of our Sunday School Society in America, whom we should have so gladly welcomed

among us to-day, has well said—‘He that hath a sunny faith should let his light shine.’

Let us take heart, then, let us be joyful in the Lord, in our work and in our whole life. And when clouds are dark and gloomy, as they often are, around our heads or around those of our friends, our faith in God will help us, and we shall

‘Look sunward, and with faces golden,  
Speak to each other softly of a hope.’

And so, ‘toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing, onward through life’ let us go, leading our scholars, and our scholars leading us, until the time comes for us each to lay down our tools; feeling sure that the building will still go on until at last the Divine edifice of God, the Living Temple of Humanity, will be completed, and all creation shall cry aloud, ‘Behold, it is very good.’

MARIAN PRITCHARD.

#### SEEING HEARTS.

MEN fain would prove that Thou dost live,  
And know that Thou dost love;  
Thy Spirit, Lord, we daily grieve  
Who seek to know and prove.

We cannot know and cannot prove—  
So near to Thee are we:  
That Thou dost live and Thou dost love,  
Thou gavest us hearts to see.

Oh! yet again this wisdom give,  
And purer hearts to see,  
That they best prove that Thou dost live  
Who humbly walk with Thee:  
And that fair wisdom, treasure-trove,  
We lose but find again,  
That they best know that Thou dost love,  
Who love their fellow-men.

E. L. H. THOMAS.

#### Courage and Confidence.

*Numbers* xiii. 30 :—‘And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it.’

N the hour to which these words carry back our thoughts, Israel stood with the desert behind her, and the fair land of Canaan lying at her feet. She had endured much, she had accomplished much; and yet the multitudes within her camp believed, as many after them have believed, that deliverance must be won for them, and that all they had to do was simply to desire, and to take possession.

Trouble and toil were all too hard for them. To such nerveless creatures victory must be without effort, and if not, if God called upon them to strive and fight and fall in His high service, they found no halting-place between overweening confidence and blank, shameless despair.

For many a day the Israelitish sentinel had watched for the return of the scouts; and, all the while, fear marched up and down among the anxious people; they wondered sorely what tale the returning ones would have to tell.

At last they came; but, although all told of the glory of the land waiting to be won, ten of the twelve spoke hopelessly enough. The cities were great, and their walls were strong. Fierce warriors kept the gates, while pre-eminent in prowess and in might the

stalwart sons of Anak towered above their Canaanitish kinsmen, the most fearsome of them all.

And poor Israel lost heart again ! Again was heard the sad and wretched plaint, ‘ Were it not better for us to return into Egypt ? ’ How pitiful was their unmanly desperation ! Rather would they cringe once more before the slave-driver’s lash ! What was freedom with its inspiring thought and power in the regard of men who held the flesh-pots to be blessings, who cried aloud ‘ Would God that we had died in Egypt ! ’—and who, for all that, were not ashamed ?

To such a pass had Israel come that her national career had been blighted there and then but for two men who, alone in all the host, ‘ bated ‘no jot of heart or hope.’ Caleb stood forth, and spake for Joshua and himself, to recall that timorous herd to manly confidence. Let those who would give way and wail, that should not be his part. To the soul of Caleb the forward path of duty and of sacrifice was the one that could, and therefore must, be trodden. It was the only one, to his clear vision, that bore promise not merely of triumph, but of actual safety. At his appeal, amid the storm of angry disappointment, there fell that ‘ great calm ’ which a strong and constant spirit can shed around it : ‘ And Caleb stilled the people before Moses and said, Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it ! ’ Firm and brave before the panic-stricken crowd he stood ; and for all the wild

recreant folly that would have stoned him, the light of heaven arose over the troubled night ; the rebels gazed into his resolute face, their fell purpose blunted, and at last the soldiers of Israel advanced, conquering and to conquer, into the long-sought ‘ Land of Promise.’ Out of the dauntless spirit of a man came the triumph of a people and the preservation of a faith ! And out of the same spirit in this our day and generation shall our work be confirmed and perfected.

For the strengthening of our hands, and for the warming of our hearts, we gather together before that God whom it is our glory and our joy to serve. Thankful remembrance, and glad hope, are the dominant notes in our prayers and praises now. Realizing the purpose dear to the soul of every loyal teacher and church-worker, we rise far above all impatience with the work lying ready to our hands ; we look up into the face of God’s great angel of Duty ; we forget the bonds wherewith she compels us ; we see only the beauty and the gladness with which our obedience to her brightens and glorifies our toil. Moreover, the voice of hope is wafted to us in the very air of spring. We listen now, not to the hoarse and untimely croaking of the raven from the withered bough ; our ears are greeted with the trill of the lark singing as he flies up to ‘ heaven’s gate.’ The branches, once so bare, are decked with fragrant blossom, rich with the promise of a glorious fruitage. And thus nature around us, no less

than the history of men before us, inspires and uplifts us, in the very midst of our work, by her gladdening parables.

The prophet of old spoke of exchanging 'the spirit of heaviness' for 'the garment of praise ;' and, believe me, it is nothing less than our solemn duty to put that bright garment on.

Oh, brothers and sisters in the service of God, here, amongst men, let us reverently think how much we have to be thankful for, in retrospect of the work we have at least tried to do !

We would not be selfish in our joy, but if we have helped others at all, if we have forgotten self in their service, we dare not forget to give thanks to our Father for the real good we have been able to accomplish for our own selves. Why have we taught or helped or pitied others, unless we felt constrained thereto by an inward command that was verily divine ? To us the sheer keeping of that command brought a great reward—yea, the very blessing we sought for others came back with wondrous grace upon ourselves. We are the better men and women for what we have humbly and unselfishly tried to do for the world around us ; for us life is fairer, and 'peace of mind that passeth all understanding' is our sure guerdon, which we could have won by no other road. And thus it seems, just on this personal ground, as if we had really been rewarded for all our toil, or for any self-sacrifice whatever that we have been privileged to offer.

It may be that we, like Israel of old, seem sometimes to be wandering through a desert as long as it is weary ; but what happy fellowship we have met with on the way ! Let me not only think of you faithful toilers in the vineyard gathered here. Not one of us here present but is representative of a host of others as self-denying and as devoted ! Thousands of teachers, hundreds of reliable, helpful, and true-hearted Church workers, every one of them a pillar in our scattered but loyal households of faith, it is of these we think. It is these, for whom we thank God, and at the spectacle of whose devotion we take courage. We cannot be so ungrateful as to forget, nor so unreasonable as to doubt, the work of these brethren and sisters in the faith so honoured and so beloved. There is no room here either for craven fear or unknowing criticism. Where, let us ask, can we hope to find a truer religious spirit than among teachers and workers such as ours ? Mark well this : it is no unthinking mind these faithful men and women bring to their work. Their work is all the surer, their moral (and, therefore, their religious) influence is all the stronger for that. As a rule, our teachers have thought out their position, they ground their teachings on the bed-rock of trust in a living and loving God, which they have learned from 'the man Christ Jesus.' They have, whether they are conscious of it or not, achieved triumphs which are not proclaimed upon the housetops, but which are

planted and are growing in the heart of the little child. Go through our Sunday schools up and down the length and breadth of this land, and it will be very hard to find a single teacher who has not conquered and annexed the affection and the trust of one child, at least, that comes Sunday after Sunday under that teacher's influence. Sometimes, in the quiet work of our schools, face to face as I stand with the faithful but ever unassuming spirit of our teachers, I really think that wrapt as those teachers are in a sense of duty, they are wonderfully unconscious of the strength and of the sanctity of their influence over the children. Glory to God then, brothers and sisters, for all that He has enabled us to do in the past!

But memory should only quicken and deepen our confidence for the future. Men talk widely and loudly to-day of empire-making. Yes, and so do we. There is a world of childhood waiting to be won. Its religious cultivation is appealing, I think, more imperatively and more successfully than ever to the wise and loving hearts in every section of Christ's Church, and in answer to that appeal the voice of God bids us arise and take our modest but effective share.

Aye, there it lies, even like the Promised Land before the host of Israel. What pure glory awaits the winning of it, for all who heed not the voices of fear and selfishness, who waver not at the magnitude of the task, but who spring up in brave and

glad response to the spirit of Caleb's appeal, 'Let us go up at once and possess it: for we are well able to overcome it!'

For us, to-day, there is nought but reasonableness and fitness in such a summons. Friends, we know each other, and we know our work. So, let us believe in that work more and more, for 'all things are possible to him that believeth.' In that faith in our purpose to which our past fidelity gives us the right, I would that the voices of unreasonable self-depreciation, which only invite the unjust opinions of others, who understand us not, might once and for ever die away, and trouble us no more with their unreal sentimentality. For the overcoming of all difficulties, we are 'able,' and it is just that very sense of ability, which deepens our sense of responsibility, which more sternly lays necessity upon us to work, while the light of life is ours, and which makes us feel in our inmost souls that—

'To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin.'

No! we dare not doubt, we dare not falter. And woe to all who bid the trumpet speak with an uncertain sound!

Know, then, good friends, faithful alike in school life, and in Church work, that like the true-hearted fathers and mothers who went before you, you, too, have been tried and proved, and, by the blessing of God, have not been found wholly wanting. For you, the clarion call of duty thrills with a

note that heralds grander service yet. ‘The night is far spent, the day is at hand,’ and our faces turn to greet the sun of a new century, teeming with grave questions, and with glorious possibilities !

Not one difficulty, not one task shall we find upon our way to fairer life, but what by the sure pilotage of faith and love we shall be ‘well able to overcome,’ and to accomplish.

Not for us, either, the unreal plea of souls that make the question of utility a cloak, it may be feared, only for ease and self-indulgence, as they superciliously ask, what is the use of it all?

Well, let such idlers on the field put that question, if they will ; but, in instant and uncompromising answer to them, let us, as teachers question them, and look at our work from the matter-of-fact standpoint of our daily, earthy, aye, and of our national life, no less. Believe me, friends, the contribution of the Sunday school to the discipline and to the purification of our national life is, of itself, a thing impossible for us to over-estimate. That contribution is surely the generating of a spirit of kindly, considerate, brotherly sympathy and mutual understanding, between the several and diverse classes of our great people. Over every institution in this land, be it social or ecclesiastical, there is one word written large, and in flaming letters, too,—and that one word is verily the word, ‘*Democracy*.’

To the development of good to come, to the conservation of all the good we

have and know, to the healing of any possible breach ‘twixt one class and another, what single institution has more means and advantages at its sure service, than the Sunday school ? It is not small work that lies before us ; but, as the poet says—

‘There’s no such word as fail  
In youth’s bright lexicon.’

Think, if you must, of the effort that has been demanded of you, of weariness which has possessed us all at some time, of deep and solemn self-questioning as to our own spirit or method ; but, as a last word, be sure there is no hour of patience that you have exercised, there is no loving word that you have spoken, there is no kindly look that you have bent upon those who gathered round you that has been lost. Why ! in God’s wondrous material universe, there is no waste. The subtle-matter that shimmers in the spring sunlight, as the brooklet trickles down the hill-side, may be seemingly lost in the vaster stream that skirts the mountain’s base. The grip of winter may bind it fast in icy fetters, till the warm sun shines out once more, and the rivers run into the sea. Called from the bosom of the deep, the cloud uprises in the blue sky ; and it, in turn, sheds the soft blessing of the welcome rain upon the brown and thirsting hills, and the trickling brooklet once more gushes in a fuller rill. Verily, no waste is there in God’s mighty and material world ! Are spiritual things less precious in

our Father's sight? What waste, then, can there be in that other, that ever-besetting realm of the spirit? 'The word of God,' that word, which you and I prayerfully endeavour to implant, and to foster in all who turn to us for guidance, the Lord hath said, 'shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.'

'Thou canst not toil in vain,  
Cold, heat, and moist, and dry,  
Shall foster and mature the grain  
For garners in the sky.'

A. N. BLATCHFORD.

#### SUMMER ANNIVERSARY HYMN.

FROM the East the light upspringing,  
Poured its rays abroad to-day,  
Peace from God, and gladness bringing,  
Making earth so fair and gay.

Joyful children rose from sleep  
This their festival to keep.

Lord of morning's summer gleaming,  
Thee we thank for days so beaming!

Now the sun on high is shining,  
And the sky is glowing bright;  
Even clouds, with silver lining,  
Show the blessing of the light.

Through the radiant hours of day  
We would pass with grateful lay.  
Lord of noon tide's ample glory,  
Thee we thank for day's bright story!

Soon the west will fade in splendour,—  
And the evening star will shine,  
Speaking, with its message tender,  
Of a watchfulness divine.

Morns of gladness come and go,  
Noontide glory, sunset glow.  
Lord of days so quickly flying,  
Guard us with Thy love undying.

DENDY AGATE, 1901.

#### New Year's Address.

'Put on the whole armour of God.'—  
*Eph. vi. 11.*

HE day of life is dawning, and each one of you will be called upon to fight life's battle. The New Year begins a new campaign. Why we should have this battle to fight, why there should be hard things to do, and disappointments to bear, and temptations to resist, is a question which is by no means easy to answer. But every one can see that, just as the blacksmith's arm grows strong by lifting heavy weights and striking hard blows with the hammer, so people, whether they are young or old, who have difficulties to test their powers and try their character, generally turn out sturdier people than they who have everything made easy for them.

'Tis the hard grey weather  
Breeds hard Englishmen,'  
sings Charles Kingsley, who was himself one of the hardest, toughest, bravest, and at the same time one of the kindest and tenderest Englishmen that ever lived.

So if, in this New Year, we have to battle with the 'hard grey weather,' or anything else, let us go into the fight with a bold and hopeful spirit. It will all 'turn out right,' if we do our duty, wherever the CAPTAIN bids us go. For we have a CAPTAIN, who knows all about the reasons for the battle, if we

do not; and as He wants us to be really strong and well-seasoned warriors in His army, He takes care to help us from the very beginning. It is He who gives us *the armour* that we are to wear, and if we 'put it on,' the enemies we meet cannot harm us much.

It would have been very strange, if God's young warriors had not been thought of and provided for in this way; for as we look around at the other creatures that live on earth with us, we find they are furnished with means of defence, and, if need be, means of offence too. If they are only fully alive to their opportunities, they can ward off those who attack them. Birds have beaks and talons; beasts have teeth and claws; cattle have horns, horses have hoofs; and timid gentle creatures like the gazelles, that are more disposed to run away as fast as possible than 'fight it out,' have their sharp horns also to use at the last pinch. Turn to the slowest moving of all creatures, such as the tortoise,—see what a coat of mail he wears. Look into the sea, and you will find fishes equally well provided for. It is not only the shark and the sword-fish that have weapons of offence; the flabby jelly-fish, that floats so lazy-looking in the waves, really has a poisonous lasso to fling when there is need. The cuttle-fish can turn the water inky-black around him, and so make good his escape while his pursuer is fumbling about in the dark.

Even the insects and plants are similarly helped against their foes. We

all know something about tiny creatures that sting, and delicate flowers that grow among prickles. Perhaps we have not all noticed the splendid defence provided for the sap-veins of our great trees—the strong, tough bark which shields their life-currents from harm. Did you notice the buds of the sycamore, beech, or horse-chestnut, in your walk the other day under the leafless trees? Look well at them, and you will see that the tender young leaves that are already forming there against the coming of spring-time are kept from the bites of birds and frosty winds by most admirable brown coats of tightly-fitting scales, that will only open to the touch of sunbeams when danger is past. And the tiny seeds are protected in ways which ought to make us all wonder and rejoice at the careful Providence that is around us, and that gives us human beings, also, all we need in our battle of life.

Now, the first thing we should notice about the armour provided for the creatures I have mentioned is that each has what is suitable. They are not made to wear coats of mail that would be unnatural, and only add to their difficulties. When Goliath came out to fight, he put on breast-plate and knee-greaves, and all the rest of it; and King Saul evidently thought the young shepherd David ought to be fitted out in the same fashion, if he would win the battle with the giant. But you know that David, when he tried Saul's armour on, found it only got in his way. It was no use to him. If we

had to put on an armour which was like that, we should not only feel awkward, but should very likely do badly in our fight. But the 'armour of God' is just the most wonderfully natural and easy-fitting in the world,—if we really try to wear it. And old soldiers in the battle of life, tell us that they have found the armour grows as they grow; and, instead of getting old and battered and worn-out, the more they use it the stronger it becomes. That is something like armour!

But we must look at the parts of it, one by one, so that we may better understand what 'the whole armour' is like. The chapter from which the motto is taken was written by one of the finest soldiers the world ever saw, one who could, indeed, say with honest pride at the end of his career, 'I have fought the good fight.' St. Paul (who though he had no children of his own, did not forget the little ones—see the first few verses of this chapter) goes into particulars about the armour that he advises us to wear. I don't know that he is precise, or intends to be, in the order in which he names the parts of the armour, but we can just see what he names, and be pretty sure that when the soldier has got these well buckled on he will be thoroughly prepared for the battle of life.

Well, first, St. Paul speaks of *Truth*. We are to 'gird' ourselves with it. The girdle goes all round; and the other parts, being mostly fastened to it, will surely slip and fall away if this is not secure. Be true, then, first and

last, and above all things. If you put a false label on the jar it will not make what is inside any better than it really is. Be true,—a lie will not serve you, however much it may promise to do so. You can never be bold and fearless if you try to deceive; on the contrary, you will always be more or less afraid of being found out. There is no one so steadfast and unshakeable as he who knows he has told the truth, and not tried to deceive anyone. Of course, it may cost an effort, just as a strong belt will often have a stiff buckle; but it is strong, and well worth wearing.

And now, on with 'the breast-plate of *Righteousness*.' Of course you know why the soldiers of old time were so careful to have a good 'breast-plate.' The most precious parts of the body lie within the breast, the heart and lungs, any injury to which is sure to be dangerous and may be fatal. So when you see a Life-Guardsman, or a picture of one, with the gleaming metal across his breast, you will remind yourself that just as bright and strong is the 'breast-plate of righteousness' which the CAPTAIN means you to wear. What is righteousness? Why, absolute *fairness* in everything; what we call being just; cheating nobody; oppressing nobody; keeping quite 'straight' in all things. Those of you who like to learn the meanings of words from the *roots* they spring from will remember that 'right' means 'ruled straight,' and 'righteousness' is just keeping from all things crooked

and tricky. ‘Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,’ says a writer of one of the Psalms. It is a great protection against evils of all kinds to know that you have wronged nobody. ‘Thrice is he armed,’ says Shakespeare, ‘who hath his quarrel just’; and he goes on to say that he is but ‘naked’—though lock’d up in steel—‘whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.’

So, on with this glorious breast-plate, and never fear but that it will keep your heart safe and sound, however hard may be the knocks that strike against it. But what comes next? *Shoes*; a protection for the feet. The young warrior will probably have to travel far, for the kingdom of God is wide, and the New Year will be a long one. There are rough places to be got over; and if I understand the meaning of St. Paul, he believed that the best way to get along on this journey of ours,—to be quite sure of our ‘going,’ as travellers call it,—is to be of the *peaceful disposition*. That reminder is a most important one, because some of us might perhaps think from this talk about armour, soldiers, and battles, that the chief thing to aim at is to be always contending with some one, to be always ready to challenge folk, and in general to be rather quarrelsome persons. That would be a great mistake. Even in the army of an earthly king the best officers are not those who brag and boast and breathe defiance to all the world, but the quiet, strong, wise men whose

chief desire is, not war, but peace. And assuredly in the kingdom of heaven the good fighters are those who try to carry Peace wherever they go; who remember Jesus, the Prince of Peace; who stay the angry or provoking word, and readily forgive and make friends again. Fasten on the shoes, then, and let all your paths be peaceful.

Then comes ‘the shield of *Faith*’—but *that* you have been carrying all the while, though it came so natural to you that perhaps you never thought about it. Don’t you *trust* your father and mother? Have you not found it a great ‘shield’ against troubles of one kind or another to say to yourself, ‘Mother will help me,’ ‘Father will not let anyone do wrong to me’? And at night, when you are going off to sleep in the dark, do you not feel how good it is that they are taking care of you, and that One in heaven is taking care both of you and of them? That is ‘*Faith*,’ and St. Paul knew very well that ‘the fiery darts of the evil one’ cannot break through that shield. Hold it well up to you; then the things that might make you *afraid* will fall off, and not trouble you at all. And the things that make people *envious* and *suspicious*, and *anxious* and *fretful*, will not reach you behind such a shield. Your trust is in the very best and wisest and kindest of friends; He will protect you and do all for you that is good. Worries and cares often trouble people as they get older, but they could hardly ever touch them if

they kept this shield before them. ‘Why are ye anxious . . . O ye of little faith?’ was what Jesus said to such people.

Only two other articles remain in this catalogue of the good soldier’s outfit. One of them is ‘the helmet of Salvation’—St. Paul seems to have liked the idea of that ‘helmet,’ for he speaks about it in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians (ch. v. 8),—where also he speaks about ‘the breast-plate of faith and love.’ He evidently knew what a good thing it is to feel *safe*. If the fireman had to rush in among the falling fragments of a burning house with no helmet on, his courage might well fail him. But he puts on his strong and shining helmet, and he knows he is well protected now. So we, being ‘safe with God’ can with boldness go where duty calls. All will be well with us.

The remaining article of the full equipment is a *sword*, useful not simply for defence but for offence. For there are foes to smite as well as to ward off. Whenever wrong is done, especially to the weak and helpless, the true knight finds his way that he may rescue the oppressed, and drive off the evil thing. There are vicious habits to fight down; sloth, and selfishness to conquer. Around us are the victims of ignorance and passion, those who are addicted to intemperance, to gambling, and other bad ways. The young warrior may not do much yet in the broader battle-field; but some of you *can* do something, and all will by and

by have a real part to take in this warfare. Lay firm hold, then, of ‘the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,’ the word spoken in your heart, bidding you do the right, to love the beautiful and true and pure, and urging you to help your fellow-creatures as much as you can. It is a grand sword! Do you remember what David said when in the course of his wanderings he found stored up in an out-of-the-way place the very sword with which he cut off the giant’s head long before? ‘There is none like that’ he cried, ‘give it me.’ There is no weapon for us like this ‘word of God.’

And so the ‘whole armour’ is set before us, and if there is anything missing it is—*protection for the back*. St. Paul does not seem to have believed in soldiers who run away and show their backs to the enemy, so he offered no hint of safety for that cowardly kind of person. No! it is no use running away from our difficulties, we must be brave and true and faithful, do our best, trust in God, seek His guidance, and the victory cannot fail us at last.

You children are going to wear the crown of victory some day—if you are the right sort of warriors, doing battle with wrong day by day, and helping others, like good comrades on the battlefield. And if you want some music to march to, as most soldiers do, here are some verses to learn, and to sing from time to time along with your comrades, or by yourself when you think of this New Year’s Service—

'Christian, seek not yet repose,'—  
Hear thy loving Master say ;  
Thou art in the midst of foes ;  
'Watch and pray.'

Gird thy heavenly armour on,  
Wear it ever night and day ;  
Stand till evil days be done ;  
'Watch and pray.'

Hear the victors who o'ercame,  
Still they mark each warrior's way ;  
All with one sweet voice exclaim,  
'Watch and pray.'

Hear above all, hear thy Lord,  
Him thou lovest to obey ;  
Hide within thy heart his word,  
'Watch and pray.'

Watch, as if on that alone,  
Hung the issues of the day ;  
Pray, till sin be overthrown :  
'Watch and pray.'

### THE THREE SCHOOLMASTERS.

THERE are three schoolmasters that are always at hand ; and where a man has eyes to see with, and ears to hear with, and a tongue to ask questions with, it is his fault if he is not intelligent in this world, and if he does not grow in the knowledge of the truth from year to year. But multitudes seem really to fulfil the old prophet's declaration, 'Eyes have they, but they see not ; they have ears, but they hear not.' They have eyes to see, but their idea of the use of eyes is that they are to count money with, or to read in books with. But the best books are out of doors. There are always two-legged books, and four-legged books, and wheeled books that may be read. There is something to be learned from every man that you meet, and everything that you see.—  
H. WARD BEECHER.

### Bible Lessons for the Year.



HE selections indicated below are the same as those given on this year's 'Motto Card.' Teachers who wish to keep to one type of subject will find that this list includes *four courses* of about ten or twelve lessons each ; the letters preceding the references indicate these groups, which may be described as :—

- (a) Men of Israel *before* the Monarchy.
- (b) Men of Israel *during* or *after* the Monarchy.
- (c) Parables of Jesus.
- (d) Ideals and Guiding Thoughts.

These groups are purposely broken up in the arrangement of the list, in order to meet the needs of classes where variety of subjects is specially desirable. It will not require much ingenuity to pass naturally through the whole series as it stands—the connecting links being somewhat obvious.

The list also includes four lessons suitable for the Seasons, and four for the great religious Festivals of the Church, among these being reckoned an autumnal festival when thoughts of 'harvest' having naturally arisen, the conditions and efforts that lead to a truly fruitful life may well be emphasized.

The books indicated in the notes ought to be accessible in every school or home library, and may easily be supplemented from the stores of the Sunday School Association.

## SELECTIONS.

(Jan. 5).

## I. THE NEW YEAR.

*Ephes.* vi.—‘Put ye on the whole armour of God.’ See New Year’s Address in this vol., p. 25. See also ‘Helper,’ 1898, p. 25.

(Jan. 12).

## II. ABRAHAM’S FAITH AND LOVE.

(a) *Gen.* xii. 1-9, xiii. 1-11. See *Acts* vii. 2-5 and *Heb.* xi. 8-10. Read over ‘Bible for Young People,’ I. ch. xii. and xiii., in preparation of lesson, *not* in class! (This remark applies generally.)

(Jan. 19).

## III. ABRAHAM’S OBEDIENCE.

(a) *Gen.* xxii. 1-19. See *Heb.* xi. 17-19. Read over ‘Bible for Young People,’ I. ch. xviii.

(Jan. 26).

## IV. ISAAC AND HIS SONS.

(a) *Gen.* xxvii. 1-41. Read over ‘Bible for Young People,’ I. ch. xxii., or ‘Helper,’ 1901, p. 104.

(Feb. 2).

## V. JACOB’S VISION.

(a) *Gen.* xxvii. 46-xxviii. Read over ‘Bible for Young People,’ I. ch. xxiii. Young scholars may repeat ‘Nearer, my God, to Thee.’

(Feb. 9).

## VI. JACOB AND ESAU.

(a) *Gen.* xxxii. 3-21, xxxiii. 1-16. Read over ‘Bible for Young People,’ I. ch. xxv. See also ‘Helper,’ 1901, p. 104.

(Feb. 16).

## VII. FORGIVEN BUT UNFORGIVING.

(c) *Matt.* xviii. 21-35. See ‘Half-hours with the Parables,’ 1st series, p 59. The story might be told to scholars.

(Feb. 23).

## VIII. GOD IS SPIRIT.

(d) *John* iv. 1-24. Read over ‘Helper,’ 1901, p. 194. Younger scholars may learn and repeat Pierpont’s hymn (Essex Hall Hymnal, No. 62) ‘O Thou to whom in ancient time.’

(Mar. 2).

## IX. THE CHRISTIAN’S GREAT BLESSINGS AND DUTIES.

(d) *Matt.* v. 1-16. The teacher—and adolescent scholars—will find Dr. Crosskey’s ‘Rational Piety’ full of stimulating thoughts in this connection. See especially pp. 29-36.

(Mar. 9).

## X. SEED-SOWING.

(c) *Matt.* xiii. 1-12, 19-23. See ‘Half-Hours with the Parables,’ 1st series, p. 9. The children will learn a good deal of ‘divinity’ from sowing some spring-seeds and watching what becomes of them.

(Mar. 16).

## XI. THE LOWLY MASTER.

(d) *John* xiii. 1-17, 34, 35. See also *Mark* x. 35-45. Read in children’s class Stopford Brooke’s hymn (Essex Hall Hymnal, 316), ‘It fell upon a summer’s day.’ Older scholars may learn Mrs. Alexander’s hymn (E. H. H., No. 400). ‘The faithful men of every land.’

(Mar. 23).

## XII. 'THY WILL BE DONE.'

- (d) *Mark* xiv. 26-50. Read over 'Bible for Young People,' VI., ch. xxxiv. Scholars may learn Wreford's hymn (E. H. H. 326), 'When my love to God grows weak.'

(Mar. 30).

## XIII. EASTER.

- (d) *John* xiv. 1-24. Read over Dr. Crosskey's 'Rational Piety,' pp. 151-158. For older scholars the concluding sections of the book are especially suitable. Learn and repeat Theodore Parker's hymn (E. H. H. 308), 'O Thou great friend.'

(April 6).

## XIV. SPRING.

- Isa.* lv. See lessons on 'Leaves' in this volume, p. Also Monsell's hymn, 'The Spring-tide hour' (E. H. H., 468).

(April 13).

## XV. THE BLESSED PILGRIMAGE.

- (d) *Psalm* lxxxiv.—See lessons at end of this volume. See also 'Helper,' 1894, p. 201, for Stopford Brooke's exposition of the Psalm.

(April 20).

## XVI. JOSEPH, THE WISE RULER.

- (a). *Gen.* xlvi. 1-27. The story of Joseph's earlier life, briefly sketched, would well introduce the lesson; and at the close the sequel of Israel's enslavement and the rise of Moses, the deliverer, could be indicated in preparation for following lessons.

(April 27).

## XVII. THE BIRTH AND YOUTH OF MOSES.

- (a) *Ex.* ii. See *Acts* vii. 17-29, and *Heb.* xi. 23-27. See also 'Stories from the Life of Moses,' p. 1.

(May 4).

## XVIII. THE DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT.

- (a) *Ps.* cv. 23-45. See *Acts* vii. 30-41. Read over 'Bible for Young People' II., ch. v. and vi., or 'Stories,' etc., pp. 19-40.

(May 11).

## XIX. THE 'LAW OF MOSES.'

- (a) *Deut.* vi. 1-9 and xxx. 11-20. In elder classes reference should be made to 'Deuteronomic Reform' under Josiah (*II Kings* xxii-xxiii). See 'Helper' 1901, p. 15.

(May 18).

## XX. WHIT-SUNDAY.

- (d) *I Cor.* xii. 1-27. See also *Gal.* v. 19-26. 'The Unity of the Spirit' and its 'Universality' may be illustrated by Stanley's 'Twelve Gates of Heaven' ('Suggestive Readings,' p. 174).

(May 25).

## XXI. THE GREATER GIFTS.

- (d) *I Cor.* xiii. Learn Bishop Wordsworth's hymn, 'Mighty Spirit, gracious guide' (H.P.P. 723). See Mr. Wood's address on 'The Law of Kindness' ('Addresses and Illustrative Stories,' p. 1).

(June 1).

## XXII. PRAYER AND TRUST.

- (d) *Matt.* vi. 'Consider the lilies'—one of the many fruitful sayings here—may lead on to Hosmer's parable 'The Lily, the Rose, and the Violet' ('Suggestive Readings,' p. 75). Heber's hymn 'Lo! the lilies of the field' (Hymns of Praise and Prayer, 409) should be learned.

(June 8).

## XXIII. THE CALLING OF SAMUEL.

- (a) *I. Sam.* iii. Read over 'Bible for Young People' II. xxii., or the section in 'Heroes of Israel,' pp. 59-67. Children may learn J. D. Burns's verses 'Hushed was the evening hymn' (Hymns for Children, 385).

(June 15).

## XXIV. THE ANOINTING OF DAVID.

- (b) *I Sam.* xvi. The story of Saul ought to be summarised as introduction. See 'Heroes,' 68f.

(June 22).

## XXV. MIDSUMMER.

- Ps.* civ. (or *Ps.* xix.) Learn Carlyle's verses 'So here has been dawning' ('Addresses and Illustrative Stories,' p. 26).

(June 29).

## XXVI. JONATHAN AND DAVID.

- (b) *II Sam.* i. Read over and tell first the story given in *I Sam.* xx. and sketch the battle of Gilboa, ch. xxxi.

(July 6).

## XXVII. ABSALOM'S TREACHERY.

- (b) *II Sam.* xiv. 25-33 and xv. 1-12. Contrast 'The Faithfulness of Sayid,' by Sir Edwin Arnold ('Suggestive Readings,' p. 79). (July 13).

## XXVIII. ABSALOM'S DEATH.

- (b) *II Sam.* xviii. The whole story of the 'Intrigue' may be read for reference by teachers of elder classes in 'Bible for Young People,' III., ch. v.

(July 20).

## XXIX. THE TARES.

- (c) *Matt.* xiii. 24-30, 36-43. See 'Half-hours with the Parables,' 1st series, p. 19.

(July 27).

## XXX. THE TEN VIRGINS.

- (c) *Matt.* xxv. 1-13. See 'Half-hours,' etc., 1st series, p. 82.

(Aug. 3).

## XXXI. SOLOMON'S WISDOM.

- (b) *I Kings* iii. 4-28. See 'Bible for Young People,' III., pp. 91-108. Whittier's poem, 'King Solomon and the Ants,' may be read ('Suggestive Readings,' p. 149).

(Aug. 10).

## XXXII. REHOBOAM'S FOLLY.

- (b) *I Kings* xii. 1-20. See 'Bible for Young People,' III., ix.

(Aug. 17).

## XXXIII. THE TALENTS.

- (c) *Matt.* xxv. 14-30. See 'Half-hours,' etc., 2nd series, p. 39.

- (Aug. 24). (Oct. 5).
- XXXIV. WAGES.**
- (c) *Matt.* xx. 1-16. The 'penny' was a 'denarius,' worth about 8d., then a labourer's wage for a day. See 'Half-hours,' 1st series, p. 70.
- (Aug. 31). (Oct. 12).
- XXXV. STORIES OF ELISHA.**
- (b) *II. Kings* iv. See 'Bible for Young People,' III. pp. 197—205.
- (Sept. 7). (Oct. 19).
- XXXVI. NAAMAN.**
- (b.) *II. Kings* v. See above reference, pp. 205-216.
- (Sept. 14). (Oct. 26).
- XXXVII. THE GOOD SAMARITAN.**
- (c) *Luke* x. 25—37. See 'Half-hours,' 2nd series, p. 50. Learn 'He saw the wheat-fields waiting' (Hymns for Children, 316).
- (Sept. 21). (Nov. 2).
- XXXVIII. AUTUMN.**
- Ps.* lxxv. See Mr. Cadman's address in 'Addresses and Illustrative Stories,' p. 103. Read Whittier's verses, 'O Painter of the fruits and flowers' ('Suggestive Readings,' p. 47).
- (Sept. 28). (Nov. 9).
- XXXIX. THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.**
- (d) *John* xv. 1-16. The teacher will find it very profitable to read Crosskey's 'Rational Piety,' pp. 93-118, before attempting his lesson on 'Discipleship.' See also Davis's 'Philippians and Philemon,' p. 51.
- XL. THE BEST RICHES.**
- (c) *Luke* xii. 13-31. See 'Half-hours with the Parables,' 2nd series, p. 109. Or the lessons in this volume on 'The Most Precious Thing in the World.'
- XLI. GOD'S LOST TREASURE FOUND.**
- (c) *Luke* xv. 1-10. See 'Half-hours,' etc., 2nd series, p. 88.
- XLII. THE TWO BROTHERS.**
- (c) *Luke* xv. 11-32. (Or 'The Prodigal Son'—see 'Half-hours,' 1st series, p. 125). From a different point of view, see 'Helper,' 1901, p. 122.
- XLIII. BRAVE AND TRUSTY.**
- (b) *Neh.* ii. See 'Helper,' 1901, p. 35. Children may learn hymn 'Let us be tender, trusty and true,' etc. (Hymns for Children, 292).
- XLIV. BUILDING UP JERUSALEM.**
- (b) *Neh.* iv. 6-21, vi. 15, 16. See lessons on 'The Holy City' in this volume.
- XLV. A DUTY FOR EVERY MAN.**
- (d) *Rom.* xii. Read in class (some might learn the verses) 'If you cannot be on the ocean' (E.H.H. 493). See also 'Addresses and Illustrative Stories,' p. 139.

(Nov. 16).

## XLVI. THE RIGHT SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

- (c) *Luke* xviii. 1-17. See 'Half-hours,' 1st series, p. 139.

(Nov. 23).

## XLVII. THE TEST OF A TRUE LIFE.

- (d) *Matt.* vii. See 'Successful Life' *passim*, but especially last chapter. Learn Bonar's hymn 'He liveth long who liveth well' (Hymns for Children, 106).

(Nov. 30).

## XLVIII. GLIMPSES OF THE KINGDOM.

- (c) *Matt.* xiii. 31-33, 44-52. Illustrations of the incidents used as parables are given in 'Half-hours.' See the two volumes. But the grouping may serve to suggest the *nearness* of the spiritual side of life—all incidents may teach. Learn Herbert's 'Teach me my God and King' (Hymns for Children, 29).

(Dec. 7).

## XLIX. THE LAW OF CHRIST.

- (d) *Gal.* vi. 1-10. See Dr. Drummond's 'The Epistle to the Galatians,' pp. 187-194. Learn Gaskell's 'Though lowly here our lot may be' (Hymns for Children, 96).

(Dec. 14).

## L. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

- (d) *Luke* iii. 1-20. See 'Bible for Young People,' V. ch. vii. Learn S. Longfellow's 'A voice by Jordan's shore' (Hymns of Praise and Prayer, 119).

(Dec. 21).

## LI. CHRISTMAS.

## THE BEAUTIFUL BIRTH STORY.

- (d) *Luke* ii. 1-40. Read in preparation 'Bible for Young People,' V. iii. and iv. Learn Gannett's 'Long, long ago, in manger low' (Hymns for Children, 154).

(Dec. 28).

## LII. THE CLOSING YEAR.

- Ps.* xc. The final prayer is that the divine 'beauty' may rest on us, and our work be 'established' by Him who is ever *true*. Read Mr. Wood's address on 'Grace and Truth' ('Addresses and Illustrative Readings,' p. 66). Learn Watts's hymn 'O God, our help in ages past,' and read Chadwick's 'Praise to God and thanksgiving' (Hymns for Children, Nos. 221 and 272).

CARE must be taken to guard against the reading lesson degenerating into a monotonous round of pupils reading in turn. The intelligence must be brought into play. There must, therefore, be plenty of questioning and explanation. When the lesson has been read carefully and thoughtfully, the books should be closed, and the scholars asked to give in their own words the facts and thoughts of the writer. This summing up of the substance of what is read is the most important part of the lesson, and is the test by means of which the teacher may measure the effectiveness of his work.  
(CODE BOOK.)

## The 'Code Book.'

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**A**RE Sunday schools a Failure? is a question which has been much discussed during the later months of the first year of the twentieth century. It will probably be discussed at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as it was certainly at intervals, and here and there, in the nineteenth. From the fact that such an inquiry arises, and the other fact that the schools still exist and apparently will long continue to do so, we may conclude that while there is much misgiving as to the quality of the work done, there is a feeling that it is still worth while going on. So long as we do not lose heart altogether about it, there is profit in going humbly to our task. The case of the French statesman who led his people into the war of 1870 'with a light heart' is now proverbial—would that it had no other more modern instance to bear it company! There is the well-known story, too, of the young preacher who went with an air of triumph into the pulpit to preach his first sermon, but who failed so completely that even he was not deceived. The fatherly old deacon met him at the foot of the pulpit-stairs, as he came down crest-fallen, and said to him, 'Young man, if you had gone into the pulpit this morning in the frame of mind in which you are coming out, you would probably have come out as triumphantly as you went in.'

To judge by the testimony of the many writers and speakers who have discussed this question, it is clear that many Sunday schools *are* failures. This conclusion does not depend on the evidence, so overwhelming and indisputable, that but a small proportion of the scholars continue to attend after they reach their 'teens. That is bad enough, and should set all ministers and church supporters thinking as to the way in which the school and the church can be linked together, and how the needs and capacities of those who are growing up into the desire and something of the power of self-direction should be met. But the failure of the Sunday school is not only, or even chiefly in our opinion, a failure in respect of those whom it cannot keep. It is a failure in respect of those whom it does keep for a time. They get little or no real good of it. There is much reason to hope that, if those who do attend were successfully dealt with, the difficulty with the others would not be so great, although it would still exist and would require solution on special lines.

Now, if these confessions which we have read and heard of late are not over-done, in a sudden fit of dejection, there is generally speaking a great deal the matter with Sunday schools. The consciousness that this is so receives stimulus, we believe, from comparison with the splendid provision now made in our large towns, and in many rural parts too, for elementary day-school education. The day schools are, no doubt, far from being perfect, though

they are not so imperfect as some ill-informed critics are apt to think—or, at least, say. But compared with them the average Sunday school is very defective indeed. It would have done fairly well in primitive times; its close quarters, bad lighting, ill ventilation, ugly decoration, its poor supply of educational material, and its staff of ineffective teachers, would have passed muster, perhaps, in the good old times. One thing only those old times did not suffer from, if the records are true, which now seriously troubles the hearts of good people. The teachers of the early days may have been old-fashioned, and content to work in poky rooms and with very poor appliances; but they were in *earnest*. The saddest of the charges brought against the Sunday schools of to-day does not lie in the statement that the teaching power falls below that exhibited by trained professionals in the day schools; *that* could only be expected, and its remedy would obviously be to train the amateurs for their work also. But what people say is that the teachers in too many cases are either sluggishly reluctant, being pressed into a work which they do not like, or that, having assumed the duty of teaching they regard it lightly, neglect its opportunities, forget its responsibilities, and by their own slovenly behaviour, unpunctuality and levity, lower the whole atmosphere of the place.

The remedy for this is not readily found in practice, however swiftly the mind leaps towards it. Surely there

has been a lack of 'religion' in the work; not a lack of theology—there has been too much of that, of a sort. But where is the heart aglow with love for souls, where the mind imbued with a desire to be good and to help others to be good, where the sense that on the uses or misuses of the precious hours of childhood and youth depend the destinies of the whole life-time? To quicken these things—who shall find the way? Does it consist in studying a book, or mastering a method? No; the thing that is wanted is life, and that 'more abundantly'; and life, as a rule and in greatest measure, is communicated from one living soul to another. It is only here and there that a book quickens the heart and redeems it to God. Loving and really living people are the most effective channels of this grace. There is a thought here for all whose influence may reach the teachers, and especially for ministers.

But in this place we must address ourselves to our own peculiar task, knowing well—as we have said—how comparatively little good may be expected from the printed page, when contrasted with the effect of a really devoted and inspiring man in the midst of his fellows. We have, indeed, yet to name what would be to us the most discouraging of considerations were it not that the hope that 'springs eternal in the human breast' will not let itself be utterly kept down. It has actually been said that part of the failure of the schools is due to the many excellent

'helps' provided for the teacher! Here is a paradox, indeed, and one hard to receive, did we not know from experience, and from the assurance of the biologists, that it is *not* always for the benefit of an organism whether plant or animal, irrational or human, to supply it with food over abundantly and on too easy terms. Teachers, we hear, only too readily succumb to the temptation to be lazy. Why take thought and prepare a lesson? Does not the Sunday School Association, or some other universal provider, supply a miscellaneous assortment of lessons, all ready cut out and made up like the suits we see in the shop-windows? What more easy than to get a ready-made lesson and force it on to the class? It saves one so much time, and if the lesson does not fit—it must be the fault of those wholesale 'cutters'! It is in some such fashion, as good and substantial witnesses declare, that the poor teachers delude themselves, and cheat the poor scholars; and so the very means of assistance are made into a hindrance. It is as if a sinking man should strangle himself with the rope flung out to save him! Shall we then leave off 'cutting out' lessons, and keep our well-meant 'ropes of salvation' to ourselves? Or shall we all try to grow wiser, helpers and helped, together?

#### THE DAY SCHOOL CODE.

Let us see what the British Government does in the matter of education.

In one way or other by far the majority of us have to do with the public elementary schools; but very few, it may be safely said, know much about the way in which their work as a whole is regulated. There are, of course, the Acts of Parliament, which underlie the system, and which define the principles which must be followed by the district authorities, and the conditions upon which financial aid may be given from the local or national revenues. Probably even these Acts are but vaguely known to many of us, but it is certain that the regulations based upon them and issued by the Education department are still less known to the bulk of the people. They are, however, contained in an easily procurable 'Code Book,' which is re-edited from time to time, and in which School Boards and other managers of elementary schools may find out their powers and responsibilities. The edition now current is a good-sized volume of close print, and would hardly be the first choice of an average reader seeking to amuse a leisure hour. It is, nevertheless, a truly fascinating book when one has the right sort of eyes to be fascinated, just as a seedman's shop is a condensed Paradise to the mind that can look into things.

It was not surprising, therefore, that so ardent a lover of education, and so indefatigable a worker in its cause, as the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, should have wished that a similar book, giving the best wisdom on the methods and materials of teaching might be

prepared for the use of Sunday School teachers and their supporters. Still less surprising was it that those to whom Mr. Bowie made known his suggestion at once fixed on him as being, with his long experience, the best man to prepare such a book. And now our 'Code' has been published, and may be had for sixpence at Essex Hall.

From what has been said of the Government Code Book, which is the avowed model for the 'Code Book for Sunday School Teachers' it will not be supposed that those who cast eyes upon its official-looking blue cover, or hastily glance over its pages, will fall in love with it at first sight. Just so, your little neighbour who likes flowers, but dislikes the trouble of growing them, can hardly yet understand your pleasure in going to the seedsman and selecting parcels from his bags, boxes, and bins. But that tradesman, as you know well, is a dealer in magic of the highest kind; and at a small cost he lets you into the secret, and you can go away and work the trick—nay, the miracle—of making the wilderness blossom like the rose.

#### OUR 'CODE BOOK.'

With an encouraging word, then, to any who would hold back, checked by the 'dry' look of the book—are not poppy seeds dry?—and reminding ourselves that we must seek elsewhere and each for himself the vitalizing sunshine that shall make these seeds germinate and come to bloom, let us look

for awhile steadily into this little work and see what it contains. After we have seen through it thus, we shall fail to get the benefit of it that we should, unless we make it an habitual Code of reference, just as the responsible managers of a day school do with the Government book. Of course, there are no grants, such as they have in view, to be earned in our work, but is there *nothing* to be earned? The earnings, true and priceless as they are, are likely to fall most plentifully to him who deals with this Code (or other guides of the kind wherever they are to be found) as the pious Israelite did with that more ancient Code of 'The Law' in which he loved to meditate 'day and night.'

#### THE IDEA OF OUR WORK.

The book begins, very wisely, with a note all too brief, on 'The Teacher's Aim and Work.' But brief as it is, this section admirably indicates the dominant idea of our work. That idea is to quicken the young life and to assist the young mind to do its own thinking, fearlessly yet modestly, and to go on to deeper thinking as knowledge widens. We have no right to burden the child's mind with a multitude of facts about which it cannot really feel interested. Unless the pupil in some real sense gets more *life* under the teacher's touch, the hour is wasted. But the paragraphs of this section, based as they are on the experience of the acutest observers and examiners of edu-

cational methods, are so good that we must transcribe at least some part of them :—

Teachers frequently commit the mistake of giving information and implanting ideas which ought to be drawn out of the children themselves by means of a few well-directed questions. In the reading of passages of Scripture and in the repetition of poetry this should be borne in mind. Explanations should not be given by the teacher until every means of obtaining them from the class has been exhausted. This is necessarily a slow process, but at the same time it is a most helpful one. It will lead children to think for themselves and to take a keener interest in their school work. Too much telling on the part of the teacher dulls the minds of the children and causes their interest to flag : their lessons become monotonous ; and the children, if they listen at all, merely become receptive organs of a mass of information which they never digest, and which does nothing in the way of cultivating thought or strengthening character. Teachers should remember that results reached by the exercise of the children's own faculties are more valuable and permanent than those which are produced by simply telling them things. The personal efforts made by the scholars impress the facts upon their memory and also develop their reasoning powers. Besides, children really like to find things out for themselves. To guide and inspire their fresh young minds is the work of the teacher. To educate means to train, to lead out.

Of course there are many matters of history and interpretation which cannot be obtained from the class by this plan of asking questions and stirring up personal thought in the children—matters

which must be told directly by the teacher—but in the main the teacher's work is to train, not to tell.

'The true use of a school,' says Channing, 'is to enable and dispose the pupil to learn through life.' And if we extend the field of 'learning' to its fullest, so as to engage all the faculties, mental, moral, and spiritual, there can be no doubt that this is among that wise man's wisest sayings. Mr. Acland, too, one of the best Ministers of Education we have had, said in the House of Commons in 1893 :—'Our object is to consider not merely what the children know when they leave school, but what they are, and what they are going to do; bearing in mind that the great object is *not merely knowledge, but character.*'

These observations refer to all school work ; with how direct a force, then, must they bear on Sunday-school work ! The 'Code Book' naturally recalls us to the primary intention of Sunday-school teaching, namely, 'to develop the moral and religious life' of the pupils. This ideal of *development* is fundamental, and can hardly be referred to too often. Its bearing will be observed in all that the 'Code Book' says as to the organization and equipment of the school, as well as in regard to the teaching, services, and other work undertaken in connection with it.

#### ORGANIZATION.

Such being the aim of the work, how is it to be done ? Without attempt-

ing to delineate a theory of the model Sunday school, the 'Book' assumes the usual organization, and proceeds to give advice to the superintendent and teachers. There is, indeed, a section devoted to suggested 'rules,' in which the ordinary constitution is sketched out. Probably few will question the propriety and usefulness of having a recognized head or 'superintendent' of the school, though whether he is most happily named by this very official title is doubtful. In the evening continuation classes connected with the London School Board, the title given to the person, man or woman, in charge of the school is 'Responsible Teacher,'—the somewhat hard title of 'Master' or 'Mistress' being thus avoided. A shrewd critic would say this would never do for the Sunday school, because there we want *all* teachers to feel 'responsible.' But perhaps some happy thought will strike a reader who feels with us that a title more suggestive of affection, or at least fellowship and co-operation, might be introduced at this stage in the history of the movement.

Name our recognized head of the school how we will, the 'Code Book' has this wholesome reminder for him or her :—

The duty of the Superintendents is to foster the schools under their care by every means in their power, to smooth down the difficulties of teachers by constant encouragement and sympathy, to have at heart the mental, moral, and religious welfare of the scholars, and to see

that they are brought up in habits of punctuality, of good manners and language, of cleanliness and neatness, and also that the teachers impress upon the children the importance of cheerful obedience to duty, of consideration and respect for others, and of honour and truthfulness in word and act.

In dealing with shy or nervous children, care should be taken to extend to them such kindly and sympathetic treatment as will tend to lessen their self-consciousness, and at the same time to encourage within them the growth of a spirit of self-reliance—one of the essential conditions in the successful education of children.

This is, we see, adopted from the 'London School Board Code for Managers'—a subordinate book of directions issued in accord with the Government Code. Among the contents of our 'Code Book for Sunday School Teachers' we see other references to and adaptations from similar sources, among them being 'Visitors' Reports' and other matter issued by the Manchester District S.S.A.; 'Instructions to H.M. Inspectors,'—a very rich field for exploration; quotations from the Essex Hall publications; and a specially good extract from the Rev. Henry Rawlings' 'Practical Hints for Sunday School Teachers.' It is probable that next Whitsuntide will see good fruit from the invitation given to people of experience throughout the country to send Mr. Bowie other useful material, either quoted from sources already existing or written specially for the occasion.

## METHODS.

It has to be remembered that nothing is so elastic as human nature, and all suggestions of methods to be adopted are useful only in the degree that they are taken merely as suggestions and not as types to be copied invariably. Some principles, of course, are common to all kinds of educational work. We have already quoted some of them from this 'Book' and elsewhere. Doubtless, also, the advice is universally good which is given here to teachers to be orderly and to maintain discipline, to be faithful, punctual, full of life, careful in preparation, and cheerful in giving the lesson, to take an interest in the scholars personally, and to 'try to be not only their *Teacher*, but their *Adviser* and their *Friend*.' Similarly the plan of arranging one's series of lessons for some weeks, if not months, ahead may be unreservedly commended to any teacher who wishes to do permanently valuable work. The ideals of brightness, good temper, and regularity are equally necessary to keep in view. In these things we are all—or we should be all—'methodists.' John Locke says: 'Order and constancy are said to make the great difference between one man and another. This I am sure: nothing so much clears the learner's way, helps him so much on it, and makes him go so easy and so far in any inquiry, as a good method.' In short, teaching without method is sailing without a compass; if you do get into port it is by accident, and there are more chances of ship-

wreck than of arriving at any desired haven.

But children vary in years and capacities, and teachers vary in opportunities of preparation, and districts and seasons vary, and with them the special needs of the young minds; hence the necessity of the familiar caution that 'circumstances alter cases.' One class's food is another's poison. The utmost alertness and agility are needed, if the Sunday school is not to fail either through deadly dulness or sheer inappropriateness. Here it is that the perpetual *freshness* of the work is secured,—that is, for those who would rather take trouble than fail. Teachers may prefer, or find themselves more or less driven to adopt, one method rather than another,—here the 'object lesson' is successful; there, and in those special conditions, it is a nuisance. Here 'reading round' is excellent, and gives all a chance of doing something; there reading by a few selected scholars or by the teacher, or even no reading at all, but simple *telling*, may be found best. Here the teacher may be a good catechist by nature or practice, dexterous and tactful; there the strong point is description and narrative, in which case it would probably be court ing failure to disregard this power, and devote oneself wholly to the Socratic method.

The cardinal rule is given in Froebel's motto: 'Let us *live for* our children'—experience will go far to guide the loving, devoted heart in the choice of method and materials. We shall, in-

deed, do well to study our 'Code Book,' and see whether any of the admirable methods suggested there have advantages which we have not yet gained in our methods hitherto; but the thought of *living* for the children will help us chiefly in our decision.

And there is something more—as Froebel says, after giving the rule just quoted—'thus will our children's life bring us peace and joy; thus shall we begin, ourselves, to grow wise, to be wise.' That suggests a thought we should like to see writ large in every 'Code Book'—for Sunday - school teachers, especially, as they have no material incentives to keep them true to their best in the work. The Sunday school is not a place of education for the scholars alone; it is also a place of education for the teachers. From the oldest and most cultured mind in the school to the lowliest child,—all are learners; and if the work is wisely and lovingly done, it ought not to leave anyone who touches it without some real and beneficial development.

Why is it, we have asked ourselves, that so many of the more acute and vigorous young people in our congregations have come to look upon 'teaching in the Sunday school' not merely as a piece of unwelcome drudgery, but as leading necessarily to a sort of namby-pamby 'softness' in mind and character for those who engage in it? The idle jibes of the flippant may be disregarded; but let us ask ourselves whether the general life and work of the school has been such as to attract

the strong and intelligent minds with a promise of deep interest and actually valuable self-culture. Here another section of the 'Code Book' may assist us, as it tells us

#### WHAT THE MINISTER MAY DO.

Taking a leaf from those very suggestive 'Instructions to H.M. Inspectors,' and adapting it to our peculiar work, we read :—

It is often in the power of a judicious and sympathetic Minister to render substantial service in many ways to the younger teachers. Those young people are sometimes without access to books or means of intellectual or social improvement, other than those supplied by the school itself. A Minister may, after kindly inquiry into their special tastes and needs, help them much by the loan of books,—not necessarily books connected with lessons, but any literature calculated to widen their range of thought, and to cultivate and refine their tastes. But study and bookwork alone do not complete the education of these young persons for the work and the life which are before them. A natural history club, a debating or literary society, a course of University Extension lectures, a visit to a neighbouring picture gallery or famous building, a well-planned holiday excursion, may have no visible or immediate relation to the school duties; but any one of these things is in its own way useful in its influence on the character and general power of the youthful teacher. The future usefulness of the teacher depends, not only on what he knows and can do, but on what he *is*—on his tastes, on his aims in life, on his

general mental cultivation, and on the spirit in which he does his work.

True—‘Study and bookwork alone do not complete the education’ of any young persons, ‘for the work and the life which are before them.’ There are thousands of young people eager just now to benefit by classes at institutes, etc., to attend University Extension centres, to matriculate at one of the Universities, or even to graduate. Good; but their education should be of the heart and soul, as well as of the mind; and just as young medical students ‘walk the hospitals,’ and civil engineering students go through workshops, those who wish to be genuinely effective members of society, counting amongst the mass of men and women as worth something, ought to find in earnest and regular contact and intercourse with human nature, as it comes in the child, a means of educating them in the finer graces, in the virtues of gentleness, patient strength, and sympathy, as well as in the departments of religious study that would thus—and in many cases thus only—be opened up before them.

Ministers, knowing as no one else can both the burdens of drudgery in religious work and those pure joys which only such service can bring, are much to blame if they do not with a true and faithful heart seek to bring their hearers, old and young, to such an elevated conception of the meaning of this work; and, if the Sunday school is *not* as yet a real academy for the edu-

cation and development of the teachers in the things of the spirit, they must try to make it one. In that way the whole system will be uplifted, and the reproach now brought against it with too much justification will be taken away.

#### TOPICS FOR LESSONS.

A few words only need be added on the subject of the ‘Topics for Lessons’ which are indicated in the latter half of our ‘Code Book.’ As we might expect, Mr. Bowie has gathered together a great variety of suggested subjects, with references sufficient to help any diligent and able-minded teacher;—any who cannot profit by this ‘book of the Law’ and these counsels from ‘the Prophets’ would hardly be helpable ‘though one rose from the dead’ to talk to them! From the sources of East and West, from ancient and modern writers, he has found for us materials which, like those seeds we spoke about just now, look on these pages dry and parched, but which contain germs of beautiful life, if we only know how to sow and plant. The Bible, of course, supplies the bulk of these subjects. ‘Of course,’ because it is both the richest, and happily, the most accessible of all sacred literatures. There is a copious plan of lessons by Mr. W. C. Gannett, and other schemes, compiled by Prof. Carpenter and others, on subjects connected with the Old Testament or the New. There are also brief state-

ments of ‘Unitarian Doctrine’—very dry little morsels these, and yet when they expand in the life of a good Unitarian citizen, how splendid the efflorescence and fruit! Then, we find lessons in religious poetry and other literature, in science, and in history. Philosophy has its place in ‘the study of Religion.’ Perhaps the next edition will give us something in Art. Lists of books and other appliances for the different classes and for schools as a whole, help to make the ‘Code Book’ the useful directory it aspires to be. In short, no school need fail, if this is in the hands of the teachers,—if only the teachers will find their way to place themselves and their whole work of human gardening under the Sunshine.

EDITOR.

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‘HE prayeth well, who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.’

There is, in the Book of Deuteronomy, a commandment enjoining kindness to birds; and the remarkable thing about this commandment is that there is a promise attached to it, and this promise is the *very same* as that which is attached to the commandment enjoining the honouring of parents—‘that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.’ And the reason seems to be this: the spirit of kindness is the same whether it be displayed to birds or men. And so, also, is the spirit of cruelty the same. The man who will be cruel to a bird or beast will be cruel also to his fellow-creatures. The boy who will wantonly destroy a bird’s nest, and break up his pretty life, and stop his pretty song, will be likely, when he grows older, to break his mother’s heart, and to bring down his father’s grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.—J. BYLES.

### A SONG OF HOMELAND.

‘Here and here did England help me :  
how can I help England?’—*Browning*.

ENGLAND, how shall I serve thee ?

With glittering spear and glave,

That all men may observe me,

A soldier, fierce and brave ?

Or on the salt seas faring,

Still shall I think of fame,

And win, by British daring,

A British hero’s name ?

Or shall I, lonely, keeping

The student’s vigils, wrest

The guarded secrets sleeping,

In silent Nature’s breast ?

And, like some great truth-lover,

Who wins his way by strife,

From her locked lips discover

The fountain of thy life ?

Nay, wouldest thou I should glory

In epics to record

The unrelated story

Of conquests by the sword ?

Or sing, with notes more tender,

The English April morn ?

The crocus-flower’s splendour,

And plumes of blossoming thorn ?

Oh howsoever humble,

Or high, the task I do,

My feet must never stumble,

My heart must still be true.

For staunch, as thou commandest,

Should all thy children be,

And honour thou demandest

In all who came from thee.

LAURA G. ACKROYD.

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LET it be the principal part of thy care and labour in all their education, to make holiness appear to them the most necessary, honourable, gainful, pleasant state of life ; and to keep them from apprehending it either as needless, dishonourable, or hurtful. Especially draw them to the love of it, by representing it as lovely.—R. BAXTER.

## Stories of the Early Italian Masters.

(WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN.)

[PRINCE LEOPOLD, the gifted youngest brother of our King, whose early death was deeply regretted by all lovers of progress and culture, said in a speech at the Mansion House in support of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching, 1879 :—‘The greatness of a nation must be measured, not alone by its wealth and apparent power, but by the degree in which its people have learned together, in the great world of books, of art and of nature, pure and ennobling joys.’ The following short series of papers will add richness to the lives of teachers and children if by their means ‘the great world of art’ with its ‘pure and ennobling joys’ is made more accessible for old and young ‘together.’ We have reproduced two famous pictures alluded-to by way of inducement to the reader to seek others. Photography has brought copies of most of those referred-to within easy access; but teachers will, of course, utilize whatever material of this kind they can get. Children will often learn more from pictures than in any other way.]

Care should be taken to impress the minds of the scholars with the permanent worth of the truly beautiful in thought and life, while religious usages and social fashions change with changing generations.—EDITOR.]

### I.—CIMABUE AND Giotto.

Oh! how skilful grows the hand  
That obeyeth love’s command!  
‘Tis the heart and not the brain  
To the highest doth attain.

LONGFELLOW.

The art of the thirteenth century is the foundation of all art—not merely the foundation, but the root of it. . . . The fourteenth century is pre-eminently the age of *Thought*, the fifteenth the age of *Drawing*, and the sixteenth the age of *Painting*.

You will easily remember it (*i.e.*, the fourteenth century) as the age of Dante and Giotto—the age of *Thought*.

. . . You must understand by the word ‘drawing’ the perfect rendering of forms, whether in sculpture or painting; and then understand the fifteenth century as the age of Leonardo, Michael Angelo, Lorenzo Ghiberti, and Raphael,—pre-eminently the age of *Drawing*.—RUSKIN, *Architecture and Painting*, pp. 145, 6.



ORE than six hundred years ago a boy, who lived in the beautiful city of Florence, was spending his time in drawing pictures all over his books and papers, instead of mastering the lessons that had been set for him to learn. You may say that was disobedient, but you will find that he was no idle boy, at any rate; and what he did was done with all his might, and in obedience to that greatest Teacher who inspires men to do great things.

The boy’s name was Giovanni Cimabue. He came of a noble family, and his father had placed him in a convent school, under a relation of his own who was master there. Giovanni was a clever, thoughtful lad, but he had

no great love for book learning ; his mind was filled with the longing to draw and paint, and when he should have been studying grammar, he was making sketches of people, horses, dogs, or anything that took his fancy.

Now before I tell you more about Giovanni Cimabue, I want you to understand a little about the time in which he lived, and to think how different it was from our own time.

In the years between 1250 and 1260 (*i.e.*, the *thirteenth century*), when King Henry III. was reigning in England, and when Giovanni was a boy at school in Florence, there was very little known of the art of painting. If a boy at school in our days has a talent for drawing, he can learn from the lessons given in class, and as he gets older he can attend a School of Art ; he can read books on drawing and painting, and if he is a town boy he can spend his leisure hours in the public Picture Galleries, and learn a great deal from looking at the paintings of men and women, animals and landscapes.

Six hundred years ago, however, there were no galleries filled with paintings, no Art Schools, and no printed books, as printing was not invented until about 200 years later. So the boy, Giovanni, could not get the help he wanted from the teachers in a school, nor could he look at beautiful paintings, nor read books on designing and colouring ; but the love of art was strong in him, and the desire to draw well urged him to persevere in making

sketches of all that he noticed, until at last an opportunity came, and he began the career which eventually led to his being called the ‘father of Italian painting.’

In the Church of Santa Maria Novella, which joined the convent where Giovanni was at school, new decorations were needed in the little side chapels, and the Governors of the City of Florence invited some Greek artists of whom they had heard to come and do this work for them. At this time, which you must still keep in mind was long, long ago, the Greeks were the cleverest men at painting and designing, and the Italians were glad if they could get them to come to their cities and decorate their churches and houses. If you were now to see some of the paintings by these old Greeks, you would not find them beautiful at all, as they did not attempt to paint from life, but drew very stiff wooden-looking people with hard-staring eyes. When some of these Greek artists began their painting in the church of Santa Maria Novella, Giovanni, strolling in one day, was perfectly enchanted with their skill, as he had seen nothing better, and he stood for hours watching them at work.

From the day when he first saw them, his master found it useless to try and keep him at lessons. The boy would slip out when he should have been in school and stand watching the designs being traced and painted on the walls, and one can fancy how

eagerly he would question the artists and how pleased he would be to hold their brushes or to be allowed to mix their colours. So before long his father decided that it would be best for Giovanni to be trained as an artist. He consulted with the Greek painters, and to the boy's great delight he was sent to study under them instead of going to school any more. From this time he gave his whole mind to his art; and worked so industriously that he learnt to paint better than his teachers, and his pictures were far more natural—that is to say, more like real people than those done by the Greek artists.

Painting in those days was almost entirely used for the decoration of churches, and the designs on the walls were intended to represent stories from Bible history. One very favourite design was the Virgin Mary, with her little child Jesus. The reason why this was used so often was because the priests thought that the people who could not read would understand what was meant by the love of God for men, if they looked at a picture of a loving mother with her babe.

When I have told you this, you will not wonder that the first great picture that Giovanni Cimabue painted was one of the Virgin, or as the Italians would say, the *Madonna* and Child. The word *Madonna* means 'our Lady.' When the picture was finished the people of Florence were greatly delighted with it. They had never seen anything so beautiful before, and they

were most eager to show Cimabue how much they admired his painting. So they made a procession, and with trumpets blowing and all kinds of merry-making they carried the great picture from the artist's house to the Church of Santa Maria Novella. That part of the town, along which the procession passed with the picture, has been called ever since the 'Joyous District.'

Though so many, many years have passed, this picture still hangs in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, and travellers who are visiting the town of Florence go to look at the curious old painting, and think of the young pioneer artist and his persevering efforts, and his pleasure when the people were so delighted with his *Madonna* and Child. Cimabue painted another picture which now belongs to the English people, and hangs in the London National Gallery. It is almost exactly like the one I have been telling you about, and is called the 'Blue *Madonna*', as the mother is wrapped in a blue garment and hood. She and her babe both look stiff and not very natural, but if you can go and see this picture you will not think it dull nor ugly, if you remember what you have learnt about it, and if you think of the young artist as a boy like one of yourselves.

In after years Cimabue was walking one day in the country near Florence, when he noticed a little lad of ten or eleven years of age busily engaged in drawing. The boy was sitting on the



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CIMABUE'S 'BLUE MADONNA'

(See p. 48).



grass, apparently in charge of some sheep which were feeding round about him, and Cimabue, coming near to see what occupied him so intently, was astonished to find him making a sketch of one of his sheep, drawing on a flat bit of rock with a sharp pointed piece of stone. The drawing of the sheep was so wonderfully life-like that Cimabue felt sure the boy would be a clever artist, and he asked him if he would like to go with him to Florence and learn to paint.

Giotto Bondone, for this was the boy's name, said he would go if his parents would give him permission. Cimabue went to seek the father, and found him to be an honest, hard-working countryman, who was doing his best to bring up his children well. The man agreed to let his boy go and be trained as an artist, and Cimabue took the little Giotto to live with him, and taught him all that he himself understood about painting.

Giotto, though quite a child when minding sheep on the hill-side, had a real love of all that was beautiful in nature, and had taught himself to draw the outlines of flowers and leaves, and the forms of the living sheep. So with his master's teaching and his own great gift, he learnt rapidly, and in a few years became a greater painter than Cimabue.

In the churches of Florence and in other towns of Italy, there are many paintings or *frescoes* that can still be seen which were the work of Giotto the artist shepherd lad. The word *fresco* means *fresh*, and is a painting

on a wall done whilst the plaster is still wet.

Giotto lived to a good old age, and was much beloved by all who knew him, for his pleasant conversation and ready good-humour. Only two years before he died (A.D. 1336) he built the beautiful tower of the cathedral at Florence. This tower is called 'Giotto's Campanile,' and is almost dazzling in its delicate beauty of white and light-tinted colours and carved stone, as it stands high and graceful against the blue of the sky. This is what Longfellow says of it:—

'In the old Tuscan town stands Giotto's tower,  
The lily of Florence, blossoming in stone,  
A vision, a delight, and a desire,  
The builder's perfect and centennial flower,  
That in the night of ages bloomed alone.'

And Browning, writing about beautiful Florence, says:—

'And of all I saw and of all I praised,  
The most to praise and the best to see  
Was the startling bell-tower Giotto raised.'

Now, in future, when you hear the names Cimabue and Giotto, and hear them spoken of as the 'early Italian masters,' instead of turning aside and merely thinking that these names mean nothing to you, and that pictures that these men painted so very long ago cannot possibly be interesting, you will, I hope, remember something of what I have told you about the boy artists, Giovanni Cimabue, the high-born lad in his convent school, and Giotto Bondone, the clever little shepherd boy.

## II.—LORENZO GHIBERTI.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.—*Eccles.* ix. 10.

I should never have made my success in life if I had not bestowed upon the least thing I have ever undertaken the same attention and care that I have bestowed upon the greatest.—*Charles Dickens.*

In the South Kensington Museum there is a great room, or hall, which is filled with statues and carvings that have been copied from beautiful works of art in Italy. This is a great advantage to us English people, for, if we cannot travel so far as to Rome and Florence, most of us can at least take a journey to South Kensington and see for ourselves the imitations of some of the things of which we have read and heard.

At one end of the hall, rather hidden by some statues, there are two great doors which are copied from the doors of a church in Florence, and I want to tell you what I can about them. You will perhaps think it a strange idea that *doors* should have anything to do with stories of artists and their work, but these, which are made of bronze, are famed far and wide for their beauty. Each door is divided into panels, and every panel has a story, or picture, in bronze, and is enclosed besides in a framework of leaves and flowers, all made in the same metal. So exquisitely beautiful is the whole work, that when Michael Angelo, one of the greatest artists and sculptors who ever lived, first saw the doors, he exclaimed

‘They are so beautiful that they might well stand at the gates of Paradise.’

The sculptor who is celebrated for having designed and cast these marvellous doors was named Lorenzo Ghiberti. Nothing is known of his childhood except that he was born in Florence, rather more than a hundred years later than Cimabue and Giotto. His father was a goldsmith, and from an early age the boy, Lorenzo, learned to work under him. At that time, five hundred years ago, to be a goldsmith did not mean only to have a shop, and to sell watches, bracelets, and chains; but a man who was a goldsmith then was an artist too, and designed in gold and silver and other metals, and also made beautiful vases and ornaments for churches or for private houses. The only thing we are told of Ghiberti’s boyhood is, that he had so much skill and taste as a goldsmith, that whilst he was still quite young he learned to work even better than his father, who was an excellent master. And he not only took the greatest delight in making little bronze figures, but he also learnt to paint and sometimes took portraits of his friends.

When Ghiberti was about eighteen years old there was a serious outbreak of illness in the city of Florence. It was probably the same kind of illness as the Plague, which you read of in English history as breaking out in London just after Charles II. came to the throne; but whatever it may have been, Ghiberti’s father evidently sent him away to be safe from the infection.

An Italian writer, who lived not very long after Ghiberti, speaks of him as spending his time whilst absent from Florence in working most diligently at painting, and at all kinds of modelling in wax and other materials. When the Plague was over, the governors of Florence wished to have two bronze doors made for the church of San Giovanni (now called the Baptistry), which was one of the oldest churches in the city. It was the governors, you will remember, who in the time of Cimabue invited the Greek artists to come and paint in their churches, and now you see it is again the ruling men who desired to enrich their town with works of art, and who desired to have the church doors made by the very best artist they could find.

They made it known, therefore, all through Italy, that the cleverest artists might come to Florence, and that there should be a competition in bronze work, and that the order to do the doors should be given to that artist whose work should be judged to be the best. Ghiberti was then less than twenty years old, but his father thought so much of his skill that he at once sent him word of the competition, and told him to return home.

When Ghiberti reached Florence a large number of artists were gathered together, and great must have been the excitement amongst them until the decision of the governors was made known. At last seven men were chosen for the competition, three of whom were Florentines, and one of the

three was the young Ghiberti! The work was to be a story in bronze, made the same size as a panel of the church doors, and the subject was to be the 'Sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham.' Each artist was ordered to bring his specimen work in a year from that time, and this each one faithfully promised to do.

During the year that followed nothing was seen of the competition work of six of the artists. Ghiberti, alone, did not keep his work a secret. His father helped him with his advice, and friends or strangers who wished to see his model were allowed to do so; when the year was over, his specimen, as well as those of the other artists, was complete. And now came the day for the decision. The bronze doors would cost a very large sum of money, and the governors wisely thought that it would be well to ask the help of experienced sculptors, painters and goldsmiths, in judging which was the best of the seven models.

There were thirty-four judges, and after these men had carefully examined the bronze stories over and over again, it seemed to them that three of the panels, one being Ghiberti's, were almost equally good. Perhaps they hesitated to decide in favour of Ghiberti as he was so young, but if so, they were soon helped out of their difficulty.

The other two successful artists, who were older than Ghiberti, were generous as well as clever, and when they saw that the young fellow's work was sur-

passingly beautiful and finished with the utmost care, they offered to withdraw from the competition, and begged that Ghiberti might be chosen. His work, they said, showed such promise of future genius, that they were sure it would be to the advantage of the town to give him the order for the doors.

So Ghiberti began this great work when he was about twenty years of age, and for *forty years* he laboured with patience and industry, exerting all his powers to make the doors with the picture panels as perfect as possible. He did not always succeed at once, and the first of his castings failed entirely, but instead of losing courage he immediately set to work to prepare another mould, and tried the cast again. And as each bronze story was finished, he polished it with such care and delicacy that one can scarcely believe the graceful figures of men, women, and angels are made of hard metal. The foliage of the framework surrounding each panel is also most beautiful.

Ghiberti continued, through his life, to design and make costly ornaments of gold, silver, and jewels; he was also known as a painter and sculptor, and he made some beautiful stained glass windows, and is said to have written a book. But his name is famous because of the bronze doors, and it was upon them that he spent the greater part of his life's labour. He died soon after they were completed, having worked for all those forty years, he tells us in his book, ‘with the greatest diligence and the greatest love.’

### III.—DONATELLO.

A faithful friend is a strong defence.—*Eccles.* vi. 14.

If I have not a friend, God send me an enemy, that I may hear of my faults; for to be admonished by an enemy is next to having a friend.—*Benjamin Whichcote.*

I AM going to begin this story by telling you about two friends. The name of one was Brunelleschi, the name of the other was Donatello, and they both lived in Florence about the same time as Lorenzo Ghiberti.

Brunelleschi was nine or ten years older than Donatello. He was a very clever architect, and was a great favourite wherever he went, not only on account of his learning and talents, but because he was most kindly and gentle in all his ways, and was ever ready to help others, no matter how much work of his own he had on hand.

Donatello was a sculptor, and though he was very young when Brunelleschi first became acquainted with him, a strong and steady friendship sprang up between the two men, and Brunelleschi, we are told, could not, amongst all his acquaintance, ‘ever find anyone who gave him so much satisfaction as did Donatello.’

Now, a true friend will never flatter nor pretend to admire work that he knows is not so good as it might be, and you will see from the following story, in spite of Brunelleschi's affection for Donatello, he would not praise his work when he saw that it fell short of what it was intended to represent.

Donatello had worked very hard indeed at carving a crucifix in wood, for a church in Florence. A crucifix is a figure representing Jesus Christ on the cross, and to carve the figure of a man perfectly is a most difficult task. Donatello was young, and full of eagerness over his work, and no doubt when he had finished the crucifix he felt proud of having done it. His first thought was to fetch his friend to see it, and, pleased with his own success, he stood by, waiting to hear what Brunelleschi would say. To his surprise and disappointment, his friend turned away to hide a smile and said nothing; and when Donatello begged to know what he thought of the carving, Brunelleschi said, 'Jesus Christ was most beautiful, and in his form most perfect; but, instead of carving a figure to resemble him, you seem to have carved only a common rustic.'

Donatello had quite expected praise from his friend, and was so hurt and vexed that he exclaimed angrily, 'If it was as easy to *do* the work as to judge it, you would see that my figure is like Christ, and not like a rustic; but take wood and try to make a crucifix yourself.'

Brunelleschi said no more, but made up his mind to carve a crucifix and show his young friend that he had not been hasty in finding fault. Several months passed, and one day Brunelleschi, meeting Donatello, asked him to go home with him to dinner. As the two friends walked along the street together, Brunelleschi bought eggs,

cheese, and fruit, and asked Donatello to carry the things into his house, saying he would soon follow. Now Brunelleschi had carved a wonderfully beautiful crucifix, and had placed it where his friend would see it in a good light on entering his room. Donatello was so utterly astonished and so startled that he let his apron drop, in which he had been holding the purchases. Down fell the cheese and eggs and other things, and when Brunelleschi reached his room Donatello was still gazing up at the crucifix, and the broken eggs and fruit were strewn on the ground at his feet. 'What are we to have for dinner, Donato?' said his friend, laughing heartily; 'you seem to have overturned everything!' 'I have had dinner enough for to-day,' said Donatello, humbly. 'I see now, to you it is given to carve the Christ; to me, only rustics!'

As time passed, Donatello became a famous sculptor, and I have no doubt but that he had profited by his friend's remarks on his crucifix, and that he took every means in his power to perfect his work. People came from other places to ask him to make statues for them. On one occasion, a rich merchant from Genoa gave Donatello an order for a bronze head, and this, we are told, took the sculptor a year to make, and was most delicately and beautifully finished. When the merchant came to Florence, he grumbled at the price asked by Donatello, and said that the head could not have taken more than a month to make. Donatello

was so angry and offended, that he gave the beautiful bronze head a blow, so that it fell from a height into the street below, and was utterly spoilt. The merchant then was sorry for having vexed Donatello, and offered to pay double the money, if he would make him another bust; but the sculptor refused, saying it was easy to see that the merchant 'was more used to buying beans than to judging statues.'

Some of the statues made by Donatello are most beautiful, and of one we are told that it was so extraordinarily life-like that, whilst working at it, Donatello often exclaimed, 'Speak, then, *why* wilt thou not speak?' It was a statue to be placed outside the cathedral of Florence, and it was a portrait from life, and was made with such skill, that the lips appeared just ready to speak. Another noble statue was a figure of St. George, and this also was made for the outside of a church; but it is so highly valued by the people of Florence that it has been removed to the museum, so that it may not be spoilt and worn by weather. Here, too, St. George looks almost like a breathing, living man, as he stands upright and steadfast, with his hands resting on his shield.

Donatello lived to be over eighty years old, and when he could not work any longer at his dearly-loved art, he was cared for by his friends. He could have earned plenty of riches for himself, and so have had enough for his old age; but you will not wonder that he had nothing, and had to depend upon

his friends, when I tell you how he managed his money. It is said that he kept a basket hung by a cord from his roof, and put into it all that he earned. From this basket all his friends and pupils were allowed to help themselves whenever they pleased. They could take all they required for their own use, and Donatello never expected them to ask his leave before helping themselves. At this rate, the sculptor, famous as he had become, was not likely to get rich.

Donatello's name will ever be held in the highest honour in the world of art, for he was the first really great sculptor since the times of the ancient Greeks. You have heard no doubt of the celebrated Greek statues, and have perhaps seen some that are in our British Museum—magnificent marbles, so old that no one knows exactly when they were made. From those times until the time of Donatello, there had been no great statues made, but now, with the Florentine Donatello to lead the way, there was a revival of love and admiration for all that was most noble and beautiful in sculpture; and by and by, following in Donatello's steps, came Michael Angelo, the greatest genius, as sculptor and painter, who has lived in modern times.

Before closing this sketch of Donatello, I must tell you that if you would see his works, you will find copies, or casts as they are called, of some of his finest statues in the same room with Ghiberti's bronze gates, at the South Kensington Museum. St. George is

there, and David, and many another, and one especially to which I would call your attention. It is a most lovely sculptured picture, copied from Donatello's own work in a church at Florence, and represents the Virgin Mary turning to listen to a gracious and beautiful angel who kneels whilst bringing her a message from Heaven.

#### IV.—FRA ANGELICO.

The best and noblest action which a virtuous man can perform, and that which will most promote his success in life, is to live, by vows and prayers, in continual intercourse with God.—*Plato.*

Pray without ceasing.—*I Thess. v. 17.*

FLORENCE is a crowded and busy town, and the streets are for the most part very narrow and noisy. The side-walks are filled with sightseers, as well as towns-people going about their daily business, and they push and jostle each other, in good humour it is true, but to the English, accustomed to more civility in the street, the Italians seem indifferent and not over-courteous to passers-by. Carriage, cart, and omnibus horses are adorned with bells, and the drivers flourish and crack their long whips, accompanying the crack with a sharp shout of warning to the foot-passenger to get out of the way. The rapid Italian tongue, and the high-pitched, shrill voices of fruit and flower-sellers, added to the seemingly reckless driving over the rough paving-stones, all contribute to make a din that is

overpowering until the ear becomes used to it.

From all this noise it is pleasant to turn in at the gate that leads from the street to the convent of San Marco, and to find oneself in a quiet garden, surrounded by cloisters. There are fresco paintings on the walls of the cloisters, and it is about a gentle artist monk, who lived and painted in this convent five hundred years ago that I want to tell you in this story.

The monk's real name was *Giovanni da Fiesole*, but he was called by his brother monks *Fra Angelico*, which means 'Brother Angel,' and this is the name by which he has been known as a painter for all these years. *Fra Angelico* was so called because of his remarkably sweet and kindly nature. His ready helpfulness and simple, friendly ways endeared him to rich and poor alike, and it is said of him that he was never known to be angry amongst the brothers with whom he lived. 'This,' says an old writer, 'appears to me a most extraordinary thing!'

If his fellow monks, or 'brothers,' as they were called, did any wrong for which they needed correction, he spoke to them of their faults 'gently, and with a quiet smile.'

*Fra Angelico* studied painting, and especially the art of 'illuminating'—i.e., adding the ornamental letters, etc., in books copied by hand—whilst he was very young, and he was so gifted and worked so successfully, that as he grew older and became known as a painter, he could easily have made

himself a rich man. Money, however, did not attract him; he frequently said that 'the only true riches was contentment with little,' and he preferred joining the order of the 'Preaching Friars.' He dearly loved painting, and no doubt he felt that if he lived a quiet convent life, he could give the greater part of his time and thought to his art.

The frescoes that he is famed for having painted are all from religious subjects, most of them from the life of Christ, and it is told of this simple-minded, good man, that he never began to paint a picture without first offering up a prayer, and that he used often to say that those who would do Christ's work must live in quiet thought with Christ.

The Pope, who is, as no doubt you know, at the head of the Roman Catholic Church, heard so much of Fra Angelico's goodness and holy living, that he offered to make him Archbishop of Florence. But Fra Angelico was not anxious for this high position, and begged the Pope to excuse him from accepting it. He said he was not capable of ruling men, and he preferred to live where he had to obey orders, as there was less danger thus of falling into wrongdoing than if he lived where he would have to govern others. At the same time, he told the Pope of one among the brothers of San Marco who was worthy to be made an archbishop, as he was clever in ruling, and was besides respected for his good way of living. The Pope was pleased with what Fra Angelico said, and chose

his friend to be Archbishop of Florence.

When the convent of San Marco was newly built, Fra Angelico was asked to paint a great picture of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ on one of the walls, and a very wonderful painting this is, though part of it has been rather spoilt in the course of years, and some of the paint knocked off. In the cloisters running round the garden are several fresco paintings also by him, and I want particularly to tell you about one of these, as even boys and girls may quite well understand something of its beauty.

It is not a very large painting, and is on the wall over a door which used to lead from the cloister to the 'Hospitality Chamber' of the convent. I think you all know what is meant by 'hospitality,' the kindness and courtesy shown to guests or strangers in your own house. In those convent days, the monks were always careful to receive and treat with kindness any wanderer or tired traveller who came to ask for a night's shelter, and for this purpose a room was set aside and called the Hospitality Room, or Chamber. So in a corner of the cloisters, above the door of this room in San Marco, Fra Angelico painted two of the brothers holding out their hands to welcome—not merely a stranger and traveller, but Jesus Christ himself, in the dress of a pilgrim and carrying a staff.

You know we are told in the Bible that anyone who helps the poor, or comforts the little ones, or even gives a

cup of cold water to one who needs it, is in that way doing something for Christ himself. No doubt Fra Angelico thought it would be a good thing to remind his brother monks of this, and whenever they went to receive a weary guest they would perhaps look up at the painting over the door, and bear in mind that in making a stranger welcome to eat with them and to rest, they were serving God in a humble way, and following the teaching of Christ.

In another corner of the cloister, there is a picture of a Saint with his finger on his lips. One of the strict rules of the convent in those bygone times was the 'rule of silence.' The brothers were forbidden to talk except at certain hours, and no doubt it was a help to them, especially to young monks who had not long joined the order, to look up from time to time as they passed in and out of the building, or worked in the garden, to see the face of the Saint looking down on them, with his finger laid warningly on his lips. It may have helped the eager and discontented amongst the brothers to refrain from grumbling, and the quick-tempered ones to check their hasty words.

There are no monks living in the convent of San Marco now, but their cells are still to be seen. After walking round the cloisters, visitors are allowed to go into the building and up the stairs, and along a passage, out of which the little cells open on either side. In each cell Fra Angelico painted a picture on the wall, a scene from the

story of Christ's life, and many of these pictures are exquisitely lovely, and the colours still wonderfully fresh and bright.

At the far end of the corridor is one cell that has no fresco on the wall. This was the sleeping room of a very different man from the sweet-tempered, peace-loving artist. Here it was that the great reformer, Savonarola, lived about seventy years later than Fra Angelico. Savonarola was a famous preacher, and tried to make the people of Florence see how sinful their lives often were; but his way of speaking was harsh and almost fierce, so that, though crowds came to hear him, he was more feared than loved. There is still a seat in the little garden of San Marco, where Savonarola used to sit to talk and teach, and in his cell are his Bible and rosary.

If what I have told you about Fra Angelico and his beautiful paintings should make you wish to see a picture of his, you will find one in our National Gallery. It is a small picture, with a figure of Christ in the centre, and a great number of worshipping saints and angels on either side. I do not think it is as lovely as the frescoes in the old convent at Florence. It will, however, give you some idea of the artist-monk's pictures of five hundred years ago, and you will think, as you stand before it, of 'Brother Angel,' living his quiet life and painting his sweet sacred frescoes in the peaceful convent of San Marco.

## V.—MICHAEL ANGELO.

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,  
 If Thou the spirit give by which I pray ;  
 My unassisted heart is barren clay,  
 Which of its native self can nothing feed ;  
 Of good and pious works thou art the seed,  
 Which quickens only where Thou say'st it  
     may.  
 Unless Thou show to us Thine own true  
     way,  
 No man can find it : Father ! Thou must  
     lead.

Do Thou then breathe those thoughts  
     into my mind,  
 By which such virtue may in me be bred,  
 That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread :  
 The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,  
 That I may have the power to think of  
     Thee,  
 And sound Thy praises everlasting.

*Michael Angelo Buonarroti.*

(Translated by William Wordsworth.)

IN each of these stories about the early painters and sculptors you have heard something of the town of Florence, where so many of the world's greatest artists were born and lived. Now I want to tell you about San Miniato, a hill just outside the town. On a terrace high on that hill there is a bronze cast of one of the most famous statues in the world—Michael Angelo's 'David'; but before I begin to tell you the story of the mighty sculptor, you will like to hear an old legend about this very place.

Florence is not a very large town, and soon after leaving the narrow streets a path leads between trees up to San Miniato. The tall, dark cypresses and greenish grey olive trees look,

on a sunny day in April, curiously unlike the soft light greens of English trees in spring-time. The path nearly all the way is cut into long flights of steps, and a knight with his followers was once going up these steps to the church at the top of the hill, when he met an enemy, a man who had done him such an injury that he had vowed *never* to forgive him, but to kill him the first time he met him. Gualberto (for so the knight was called) and his servants were armed, but the other man was defenceless and alone, and when he flung himself on his knees and entreated for mercy, some gentle feeling touched the heart of the knight, and he forgave him and let him go. Gualberto went on, up the steps, and into the church, and there, says the old story, the figure of Jesus Christ on the cross bent its head towards the merciful knight in sign of approval of what he had done. This we know is only a legend, but it is a pretty story, and teaches us a lesson of forgiveness.

At the top of the long path of steps, there is a terrace with a lovely view over the picturesque town of Florence and the river Arno and the distant mountains. Looking out over this wide view stands a magnificent figure of David, silently reminding us of the great sculptor who, when little more than a lad, made the statue that has ever since been one of the wonders of the world.

Michael Angelo, who sculptured the David, was born near Florence, in 1475, a few years before King Henry

VII. began to reign in England, and he lived to be nearly ninety years old. Like Cimabue, he came of a noble family. His father, whose name was Buonarroti, called him 'Michael Angelo' (or Angel Michael) because he thought that even as a tiny child he had something remarkable about him, something divinely wonderful. The Italians said he was 'born under a lucky star,' but it was not 'luck' that made the little babe seem so beautiful to his father and mother; it was the tender love that they felt for him, and perhaps, too, at a very early age the child may have shown signs of the genius, or great gifts, that God gave to him, and that made him afterwards renowned as a sculptor, painter, and architect.

The young Michael Angelo spent the first years of his childhood at a farm belonging to his father, a few miles out of Florence. All round the farm were stone quarries, and the boy grew up amongst the stone-cutters, watching them at their work, and doubtless amusing himself with chipping pieces of stone with their tools. As soon as he was old enough he was sent to school, and his father intended, when he should have had a fair education, to put him to learn the trade of wool and silk weaving. Michael Angelo, however, did not want to learn anything except drawing, and he used to spend a great deal of time in this way; but he kept his occupation, as far as possible, a secret, as his father did not approve of it, and sometimes beat him to make him give it up.

There was another boy, named Granacci, who also lived in Florence, and who was learning to draw and paint under Ghirlandajo, one of the first artists in Italy at that time.

It chanced that Michael Angelo and Granacci made acquaintance and became much attached to each other, and knowing how fond Michael was of drawing, Granacci used to bring him some of his master's designs almost every day. Michael would copy them, and so became daily more and more anxious to learn drawing and painting.

After a time, when the father found that no persuading and no beating would make Michael Angelo give up his wish to be an artist, and give his mind to learning to weave, he placed him as a pupil with Ghirlandajo, and this great painter was quite amazed at the rapidity with which the boy learnt to draw. Michael Angelo had not been long with this master when the latter, who was engaged in superintending some painting in a church, went out one day, leaving his pupils at work, and it occurred to Michael to try and draw the scaffolding which was being used by the painters. He drew correctly, not only the scaffolding and the paint-pots, brushes, and other necessaries, but also some of the young men who were at work, and when his master returned and saw what he had been doing, he stood still, filled with wonder, and exclaimed, 'This boy knows more than I do!'

Michael Angelo was unusually gifted,

it is true, but his great talents would not alone have enabled him to draw with so much skill. Besides being gifted, he was untiringly persevering, and lost no opportunity of studying and copying drawings or engravings. He is said to have copied old engravings so carefully with a pen, that no one could be sure which was the real engraving and which was the copy. He even occasionally gave back his own drawings in place of the engravings he had borrowed, without being found out, so exactly were his copies like the originals. After he had been learning for some time under Ghirlandajo, he was sent by that artist to study sculpture in the garden of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the princely ruler of Florence. This great nobleman wished to form a school for sculptors, and invited artists to send any promising pupils to copy the old Greek statues in his garden. Thus it was that the young Michael Angelo came there, and seeing others at work, copying the statues in terracotta or in marble, he was eager to try his hand, and began at once to copy the head of a laughing Faun. He succeeded wonderfully well, although it was the first time he had actually used tools and marble, but the head with its laughing mouth was so cleverly carved out that Lorenzo's attention was at once attracted. He sent for Buonarroti, and told him that he would gladly take his son to live in his house, and that he would care for him as for one of his own children.

Michael Angelo was then about six-

teen years old, and for several years he lived with Lorenzo, who treated him with every kindness, and trusted him with the keys of the garden where the beautiful ancient statues were kept. The young artist made great progress from this time, and not only did he study sculpture, but he copied a great many paintings so well that older painters were astonished at his powers; he also read and studied a great deal, especially the poetry of Dante, and so grew up with a well-cultivated mind.

I have already told you that Michael Angelo lived until he was nearly ninety years old. He worked hard for the greater part of his life, but in this story I cannot tell you of all that he accomplished. He painted great pictures, and sculptured such statues as the world had not seen before, and ever since he lived he has been looked up to as to a mighty giant in art. I will only tell you about one of his great works. The statue of David, that I have already spoken of, was begun by Michael Angelo when he was about twenty-six years of age. He knew that in a certain place in Florence there lay a huge block of marble that could not be put to any use, because it had been spoilt by some sculptor who had tried to work on it and had failed. The marble had lain there, useless, for many years, so when Michael Angelo asked the governors to let him have it, they agreed at once. The young sculptor set to work with hammer and chisel, to try and get out

of the block of white marble a figure that he could see in imagination. Inspired and guided by the idea that was in his mind, he worked with all the strength of his arm, and persevered for two long years. At the end of that time he took down the boards which had surrounded his work, and the people of Florence saw, in place of the damaged marble, a figure of David with his sling, eighteen feet in height, sculptured with such perfection that few statues, either ancient or modern, have been compared to it for beauty and grandeur. For two hundred years the 'David,' the pride of the people, stood in a public place in Florence; but later, fearing it might be injured by weather, it was placed in one of the great museums, and the bronze model of the strong and beautiful young shepherd was made and placed, where it now stands, on the terrace of San Miniato.

#### VI.—RAPHAEL.

Whatsoever things are lovely . . . think on these things.—*Philippians iv. 8.*

AMONG all the stories that are told about the painters and sculptors of olden times, there is none sweeter than that of the artist Raphael, whose short life was so full of grace and goodness, and whose pictures still fill our hearts with wonder at their almost divine loveliness. Indeed, before his great picture of the Madonna and Child, in the Dresden Gallery, men hush their voices, and gaze in reverent silence, as though in the presence of some heavenly

vision. There stands the young mother, gracious and beautiful,<sup>1</sup> her feet resting on the clouds, and on her arm her little son—the divine child, who was to become the teacher of the world,—and there nestles the child, no stiff, unnatural little being, like the babe in Cimabue's painting of two hundred years before; but a noble boy, perfect in childish beauty, looking out on the world with dreamy eyes, whilst resting against his mother in perfect contentment.

The word *divine* means, as no doubt you know, 'god-like,' or 'heavenly,' or 'excellent in the highest degree,' and as a child Raphael was sometimes called 'the Divine,' because of his beauty, and of his sweet and loving nature. And what could be more divine than a richly-gifted young life, full of promise and full of love for all that is fair upon earth!

Raphael lived at the same time as the sculptor, Michael Angelo, whose friend he was; but he did not live to be old. He was born on Good Friday, in 1483, and he died on Good Friday, thirty-seven years later. His home was in the town of Urbino, in Italy, and his childhood, as far as we know, was a particularly happy one. His parents were loving and tender, and his father, whose name was Giovanni Sanzio, was most anxious for his little son to have every care, and to be educated in all the ways of refined and cultivated life. He did not send him away to be brought up in a farm, as was the custom in

<sup>1</sup> See Frontispiece, which shows part of the picture only.

those days, 'for,' said he, 'how could I blame my son for rough or rude manners, if I let him spend his first years with well-meaning but rough country folk? He will naturally learn their ways.' The boy, therefore, grew up in his own home, under the influence of his gentle mother and of his wise father, and as his father was a painter, no doubt the little Raphael watched him at his work even from his boyhood, and early learnt to handle brushes and paints.

There is a story told, but whether it is true or not I cannot be sure, how that at six or seven years old, Raphael designed and painted a most lovely dish of majolica ware, and won much praise and admiration for his work. This may be a fanciful tale; but it is certain that he had learnt to paint well enough to be of use to his father before he was eleven years old.

Giovanni Sanzio made his living by painting in the churches round Urbino, and in a fresco in one of these churches there is a lovely boy angel, which is said to be a picture of Raphael as a child; and I think it is quite likely that the father should take his much-loved little son as a model for the angel he was painting.

Raphael's father was not a great painter himself, but he saw that his son showed promise of the highest talent, and he knew that it was not in his power to teach him for long. So he took him one day to visit Perugino, one of the first painters at that time, and asked that great artist if he would

teach him and take charge of him. Perugino was so charmed with the young Raphael's sweet face, and his evident love of drawing, that he agreed to take him to live with him; and not very long afterwards Giovanni Sanzio died.

Raphael grew up to be courteous and kind to all around him, and all through his short life he was full of love and affection for his fellow-students and for all artists who were known to him. He never wearied of helping and teaching them, and, though so young, he is said to have been like a father with his children in his manner towards those who worked with or under him.

No greater painter than Raphael has ever lived. His pictures are sublime; but his sweet influence was even more beautiful than his paintings. It was felt by all who came near him, so that when he was present ill-humour and low, common ways seemed to disappear, and all worked together in peace and harmony. At a very early age, Raphael became famous for his painting, and he spent much of his time in Rome, where he was treated with the greatest courtesy by men far older than himself, men of learning, artists, and sculptors, besides noblemen, popes, and cardinals. He lived like a prince, and when he went to Court he was always attended by a long train of distinguished men. His sweet nature, however, seems to have been quite unspoilt by admiration or flattery, and to the end of his short, bright life, he was always ready to leave his work

to do a service to any artist whom he could help with his designs, or by his advice.

In our National Gallery, there is a great picture by Raphael, one of his lovely Madonnas, with a child on her knee, and a saint standing on each side. There are also some of his smaller pictures, one of which was painted, it is believed, when Raphael was very young, and still living with his master, Perugino. This little painting is called the 'Vision of a Young Knight.' The knight, hardly more than a lad, is lying asleep on the ground, dreaming, no doubt, of future glory. As he dreams, it seems to him that two figures stand near him; one offers him flowers, the other fixes her grave eyes on him and offers him a sword and book. It is not difficult to see what the youthful artist meant by this picture. The woman with the flowers represents *Pleasure*, and tempts the boy to choose an easy, pleasant life; the woman with the sword represents *Duty*, and calls on the new-made knight to stand by his faith and to use his sword to defend the right.

Raphael's famous paintings on the walls and ceilings of the Vatican, the Pope's great palace at Rome, are very wonderful; and all his pictures, whether great or small, are full of beauty. But no painting in all the world is so wonderful as the one of which I told you at the beginning of this story, the 'Sistine Madonna,' as it called, in the picture gallery at Dresden. The Madonna holding her child, and standing on the clouds, the kneeling saint

on either side, the sweet though dimly seen angelic faces, which fill the air all around, and the two lovely boy cherubs below, resting on their arms and looking up adoringly,—these all show the height in art that it is possible to reach, and that was reached by 'Raphael the divine.'

I hope that these short stories about the Italian Masters may interest the boys and girls for whom they are written, and that they may lead them to find a new pleasure in their lives. We are not all born to be artists, but each one of us may find a pure joy in the love of pictures and sculpture. And if we can look up with love and admiration to that which in Art is 'excellent in the highest degree,' shall we not the more reverently love God, by whose divine gifts true artists are inspired?

K. F. LAWFORD.

#### A LEGEND.

SANTA TERESA dreamed one night a dream, Wherein a figure, bright as noon-day beam, Before her stood, who held within one hand, That waved it high in air, a blazing brand ; And in the other, hollowed like a pool, A dripping well of water, clear and cool. The wondering saint in troubled accents cried

'What mean these things?' The mystic form replied—

'I go to burn bright Heaven with all its bliss,

And quench the fire of Hell's dread miseries ; That henceforth, Man, all hope and fear unknown,

May love and worship God, for God alone !'

H. W. HAWKES.

## Misfortunes.

**T**HERE was once a boy, who should have been a big boy, for he was seventeen years old, but he was not taller than a child of seven; for he was deformed, and had a terribly misshapen back and chest, and a large head and little legs. He used to go very timidly about the streets, and look frightened, not at the carriages and carts, but because some boys used to run past him and sing out, 'Humpty-dumpty sat on a wall!' He knew he was very silly, and he tried with all his might not to care; but somehow when that name came to his ears, his face grew red and his eyes filled with tears, and he had to gather up all his courage to prevent running away. Nothing seemed to him more terrible than those mocking words, even though he had so much to bear in having such a poor little body, instead of being a tall, straight lad like others of his age. Little children looked shyly at him, and women said as he passed, 'Poor little fellow,' and though he knew they were kind, even their words had a sting in them, for he ought not to be a 'little fellow' now, if he had grown like other boys, and he had a big boy's heart, and a big boy's desires; and all this he had to bear, and be all his life helpless, and pitied at the best.

But he was not a coward, for how did he become hump-backed?

When he was six years old, and a straight, well-grown little boy, he was fast asleep one night, when he was suddenly awakened by someone seizing him out of bed, and as his sleepy eyes opened there was an awful glare. The house was on fire, and his father was rushing off with him, only just in time. He was so startled that he felt almost stunned, and stood in a great crowd in the street, shivering in his night-shirt, until a woman wrapped a shawl round him, and stood by him to take care of him.

But as his senses came to him again, above all the terrible roar of the fire and the noise of the crowd, one sound came to his ear;—he heard suddenly a little howl. He shouted, 'Yes, Bobby, here I am!' and rushed straight into the burning house and up the stairs before any one could stop him. The fire had reached the stairs, and they were cracking; but he leaped and ran, and at the top of the first flight of stairs into his arms with one loud howl leaped a little dog. The boy turned to run down with his poor little scorched friend, but with a loud crash the stairs broke and fell, and child and dog fell with them. A fireman rushed in and rescued the child, with the dog clasped tight in his arms. The child was much burnt, and in that fall his back was so much injured that he became the little deformed boy that never grew any bigger. Bobby got well, and in his eyes his master was all that any master ought to be, and the two loved each other with all their hearts. But the

boy had a burden to bear all his life, and he never found it a light one.

Why did not those children who sang about ‘Humpty-dumpty’ in his hearing *think* before they used the stinging words? It was not exactly meant for unkindness, and came from thoughtlessness; but it was really *cruelty*—adding to a burden already almost heavier than he could bear. If they had known his story, not one of the boys would have teased him about his bent back. In whatever way he came deformed, they might have known that it was a misfortune which he had to bear, and helped him by kindness and sympathy, instead of being so unkind. There is usually a ‘story’ of some sort behind such misfortunes; but we need not wait to *know the story* before we are kind and considerate.

Perhaps you know someone who is deaf, and how difficult it is always to be patient and kind to him, and not to fancy that it is stupid of him not to hear. But if we are impatient, it is only because we are selfish, and thinking of ourselves and the small trouble of taking pains to make him hear, instead of feeling how sad it must be to hear so badly, and to be a trouble to other people.

In a little cottage on a wide moor in Scotland, a gamekeeper lived with his family. The children played out on the moor, and one very hot and sunny day they were out playing in the sunshine. The eldest little girl had care of the baby. The children were used to be out a great deal without any hats, but

this day it was so hot that the little girl had her hat on; but the baby had none, and when the little girl felt how hot the sun was even to her when she had a hat, she was sorry for the baby’s bald head, and took off her own hat and put it on the baby.

But that hot sun made the little girl feel ill, and after she went into the cottage again she grew worse and worse; and for many weeks she lay terribly ill, with fever; and when at last she grew well again, she was quite deaf: no more sound of the birds for her, nor the bees humming in the heather, nor the lambs calling to their mothers; no more sound of her dear baby’s little voice! The poor little girl was to be always deaf.

She was sent after a while to Glasgow, to a school where deaf people are taught.

It did seem a sad reward for her care of the baby; and it makes us feel as if we understood these words, ‘Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.’

Some people who have had troubles like this to bear, have received them so lovingly from God’s hands, that rather than complain they have thanked God for giving them something to bear specially well, for His sake. And sometimes a girl or boy who is ill for a lifetime is the best and brightest blessing in the home, being the most bright and merry or cheerful of any,—the one to whom all come in trouble, and who binds all the rest together. Or an old grandfather or grandmother may be this to all the family though they

may themselves be lame or blind or deaf or ill.

There is a little story in the Book of Kings, in the Bible, about the prophet Elisha. When he was going up to the town of Bethel, some children came out of the city, and mocked him and laughed at him because he had a bald head, saying, ‘Go up, thou bald head.’ That was hundreds of years ago. Is it not strange to think that there were rude and unkind and thoughtless children then, and have been ever since; and that still in our days people have not learned to be kind to those who are unfortunate, and help them to bear their burdens? But it is not all people, or all children, who are so thoughtless. Let us try to remember that there may be a ‘story’ behind many a misfortune, and be more kind to the people who have something to bear even than to the people we love best ourselves. If we are not so, it is from thoughtlessness, and for want of *feeling with* them, or sympathy, as it is called. If we put ourselves in their place, and tried to feel what they feel, we could not be unkind to them; for it is sad to have to carry a trouble about with them all their lives.

G. M.

‘ENDEAVOUR to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others,’ says Thomas à Kempis, ‘for that thyself also hast many failings which must be borne with by others.’ He adds: ‘If thou canst not make thyself such a one as thou wouldest, how canst thou expect to have another in all things to thy liking?’

## The Compact.



OM was eleven years old, and Nellie was nine and a half. They were close friends. Tom was always ready to talk or play with Nellie, and thought her a first-rate little girl; and Nellie thought there was no one like Tom.

One holiday afternoon, they were working in their little gardens, close together, when Nellie said, ‘Tom, do you know what mother says? She says we grumble, and that we mustn’t do it.’

Tom stood up, resting on his spade. ‘When did she say that?’ he asked.

‘This morning,’ said Nellie. ‘She told me to leave off reading, and mind baby for her, and I didn’t want to do it; and I think I did grumble a little. And then she said, that we had both got a bad habit of grumbling.’

Tom thought a long time, but did not speak.

At last, Nellie said, ‘Do you think we grumble, Tom?’

‘No, I never thought of it; but you say mother thinks we do.’

‘Yes; and she went away before I’d time to say any more.’

The children finished their gardening rather silently, and then went in to tea; and that evening they did not think any more about the grumbling.

Next day, at church, when the minister was reading the Bible, Tom and Nellie each had their own Bible, to follow the reading, and there came

these words, 'Do all things without murmuring and disputing.'

The words went into Nellie like a shot. She glanced at Tom, but he did not look up; but Nellie did not see or hear any more but those words, which kept on sounding in her ears. When service was over, and they went out, she walked close by Tom, and glancing up in his face, she said very softly, 'Did you hear that, Tom?'

'Yes, chickie; I did—if you mean about murmuring and disputing. Funny it should come just to-day. Nell, suppose we look out, and try and never do it again.'

'Oh, Tom, I'm so glad; do let us. I hate to think we do it.'

'I didn't know we did,' said Tom.

'That's just the thing,' said Nellie. 'Mother said we had got into the habit, and didn't know when we did it. And Tom, do you remember the cricket day, when it was so wet? I know you did grumble then, ever so much.'

'Well, no wonder; anyone would.'

'I don't think *anyone* would. I don't think Jim would; do you?'

'Oh, no! he's always so merry. He never seems to mind anything.'

'Perhaps he does mind; only he hasn't got a habit of grumbling.'

Tom laughed, and said, 'What an old-fashioned little thing you are!'

'I don't know what old-fashioned means,' said Nellie; 'but I suppose it's something silly, and you shouldn't laugh, Tom, when we have something grave to think about.'

'Well, never mind, chickie. I didn't mean any harm.'

'And then, Tom, I grumbled dreadfully, I know, when I couldn't go to tea with Robert and Katie, because Freddy got the measles. I think I was very cross, for mother scolded me. See how many things we find out, when we once begin to think about it.'

By this time they reached home, and as they went in at the door, Tom said, 'Well, don't let us rake up old scores. We'll start afresh. If I grumble, give me a kick; and if you do, I'll do something to you. So there's a compact.'

'What's a compact, Tom?'

'An agreement, child. Shake hands upon it.'

But Nellie threw her arms round his neck, and kissed his cheek. 'There's a compact, then,' she said.

For a day or two, they remembered so well that they did not grumble at all; but after a little while they thought less about it, and one day Tom came in from school rather wet, and said, 'Mother, I'm going out with Robert, and I'm in a hurry; he wants me to go *quick*, but I had just to come in and tell you.'

'Oh, no, Tom; I can't let you go in all this rain. Why, you're wet already; it won't do at all. Can't Robert go on a fine day, instead of to-day?'

'No: he says he's obliged to go, as he has to fetch some things; so I must go.'

'But *you* have not to fetch some things, Tom.'

'But he wants me to help him.'

'No, Tom; I can't let you go, to-day. I'm sorry Robert has to go; but if he must go, he must go alone.'

But Tom was very cross, and began to grumble dreadfully. He went on grumbling, and saying many cross and angry things. Nellie crept nearer and nearer, as he stood with his angry face looking into the fire, and when she was close to him she touched him with her foot. Tom gave a kick back, and said, 'Get away!' Nellie's face grew very red. Hadn't Tom *told* her to 'kick' him? What could she do now? She thought of the 'compact.' That was a kiss, that time. Dare she kiss him? She longed to do it, and more and more she longed, as she looked at his red angry face. She looked round to see if her mother was looking—for then he mightn't like it; but mother was looking for a book in the bookshelf. Nellie turned quickly, stood on tiptoe, and kissed his cheek and whispered, '*compact.*'

Tom put her away, but gently now, and looked hard at the things on the mantel-shelf. Nellie stood beside him.

Their mother said to them: 'Here's a story that I think will amuse you,' and sat down to read it to them. It was this:—

'In a school the master wished a class of boys to write a theme, and he told them to give a description, each of them, of some day they had spent in the country. He gave them twenty minutes for it. At the end of the time, he went round and looked at their papers. Two boys, named Smith and Turner, sat

next each other. Smith wrote hard all the time; but Turner had soon done.

'This was Smith's paper:—

"On May 10th, I went to Epping Forest. I had been there before, but this time was ever so much better. There were more boys and more girls, and more swings, and lots of cricket, and we went into the wood, and we bought some flowers, and we played leap-frog, and there was a merry-go-round, and no end of fun. It began to rain as we went to the station, and then it didn't stop again, and that was a pity; but it was worse for the girls than for the boys, because of their fine dresses. When we played cricket it was muddy, and we tumbled down; but we only laughed. So we gave up cricket, and went to the swings; but the girls had got them. So we swung the girls, 'cause girls don't know how to swing themselves, and some chaps came along and wanted to get the swings. So we said, when we'd swung that lot of girls, we'd take it turn and turn about, a boy and a girl; but they wouldn't; so they went away growling. Then there was tea, and it was awfully nice, and such cake! Altogether it was a splendid day. No more now. JOHN SMITH."

'This was Turner's paper:—

"I went to Epping Forest on May 10th; but it was a horrid pouring day, and I hated it. Everything was sloppy, and it wasn't worth while to play; and it was very cold; and we wanted to swing, but some girls had got the swings, and some boys were swinging them, and wouldn't let us in except in turns

with the girls, and we didn't see it fair. And when we came home in the train, some of us were saying what a horrid day we'd had, and no fun in it, and a lot of noisy fellows set up singing, and made such a row that we couldn't hear ourselves speak. It was too nasty to write any more about. W. TURNER."

"The master asked them, "Did you two go at the same time to Epping Forest?"

"Yes, sir," said the boys.

"Well, it's clear which of you enjoyed your day the most," said the master.

Tom and Nellie looked at each other, and laughed.

"Anything more like that in this book?" said Tom, going to the table, and taking it up.

"There are several nice little stories in it," said his mother.

"We'll read it together, Nell, shall we!" said he.

And they took the book and began to run off together; but when he had got to the door, and Nellie was outside, Tom took three strides back behind his mother's chair, put his arms round her from behind, and whispered, "I'm sorry I was cross, mother," and before she could turn he was out of the room again, and away after Nellie.

After that they both remembered the 'compact' much better, and by degrees they broke the habit of grumbling, and they got a way of calling each other 'Turner,' when the grumbling fit began, and that made them laugh.

After all, Robert did *not* go his

errand that wet day, for *his* mother prevented him, just as Tom's mother did; so they went together another day. Tom wondered whether Robert had grumbled, too; but he didn't like to ask him, so he never knew.

Tom and Nellie's mother found it a very different thing to have cheerful and willing children, and she told them so. And one night, in the dark, Nellie told her about the 'compact,' and the verse in the Bible at church, and all about it. But Tom did not know that she had told.

G. M.

#### ONE DAY AT A TIME.

One day at a time! That's all it can be;  
No faster than that is the hardest fate;  
And days have their limits, however we  
Begin them too early and stretch them  
too late.

One day at a time!  
It's a wholesome rhyme!  
A good one to live by,  
A day at a time.

One day at a time! But a single day,  
Whatever its load, whatever its length;  
And there's a bit of precious Scripture to  
say  
That, according to each, shall be our  
strength.

One day at a time! 'Tis the whole of  
life;  
All sorrow, all joy, are measured therein;  
The bound of our purpose, our noblest  
strife,  
The only one countersign sure to win!

One day at a time;  
It's a wholesome rhyme!  
A good one to live by,  
A day at a time.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

## Mrs. Wild Cat & Family.

A TRUE STORY FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

**W**HAT a lot of cats there are about the place,' said the new gardener one day.

'Cats?' said I. 'Where?'

For we had no cat, and I had been thinking that we must get one, to keep the mice away.

'In the hay-loft,' he said; 'I think there's five of them.'

So I opened the hay loft and climbed in. There was no hay there, only heaps of hay seed. At the very end of the loft, where it was very dark, I saw something, and went near, when up sprang a black cat, with much growling and spitting, and fled away so fast that I could hardly see her. She scattered the hay seeds about, and flung over the little kitten which was half buried in the seeds, because she ran away so quickly. Then I found, in a sort of nest scooped out of the hay seeds, four tiny little kittens. They must have been born there, and been about two weeks there, for all their blue eyes were quite open, and they were very lively little things. I took them up, one by one, and put them in my lap. There were two black and white ones, one of which had a sweet little white face with blue eyes; and there was one all black and rather smaller than the others; and it had a little temper of its own, and it spit at me, as it heard its mother do. It was so funny that I could not help laughing; and then it

spit again! Then there was one which was tabby and white, with a dear little face, and little soft white paws: they were all as fat as could be. The poor mother must have gone out to hunt, and get her own living, and then fed all the four little babies: she was very wild, and had no home to go to, to be fed. Was not she clever?

Well, I put the four babies back into the nest in the hay, and left them. The mother no doubt came back to them when she found all quiet, and the dreadful person gone: there was a hole in the stable door, through which she could get into the stable, and climb up over the manger into a hole in the roof leading to the loft.

When I went again to look for the kittens they were gone; and for some days I could not find them; but then the gardener told me that pussy had moved them, and they were all dropped down into the manger, where the horse's hay is put: but there was very little hay, and they were right down at the bottom of the manger, and I could only just reach their little heads by stretching my arm as far down as possible. When my hand went down I heard many spittings from the poor little frightened things (chiefly from little Blackie); but I took them all out, to look at them, and found them as fat and comfortable as before, and a little bigger.

After a few days the mother moved them again, to a still deeper part of the manger, and seemed determined that they should not be found and looked at.

At last the little kittens were old enough to be taken to live without their mother, so I took little Tabby out one day, and brought her up to the house, and gave her some milk, warmed with a little hot water. I found she could lap it quite well, so I thought she had better stay. But the poor wee pet cried so sadly that after a while in the kitchen I took her back to the stable and dropped her into the manger again, and she was quite quiet then. Another day I took her again to the house and gave her some milk, and put her into a nice basket with a red knitted blanket; but she cried piteously. I left her a little while, hoping she would get more used to being there; but when I went back again, and she saw me come into the kitchen, the tiny thing stood up in the basket with her little white paws on the edge, and opened her little pink mouth with such shrill loud 'mews,' and looked at me with such sad beseeching blue eyes, that I knew she was saying 'O take me back,' and I could not bear it, and took her up and carried her back again, and once more dropped her into the manger.

Then I waited several days before I fetched her again: that time also she cried a good deal, but not so much, and she could eat and drink quite well. So we comforted her as well as we could, and did not take her back again. She was very good, and even the first night the tiny little dumpling curled up in her basket and slept alone in the kitchen, quite quietly: and now she

is quite happy and at home. The only thing she can't bear is to be left alone; she cries piteously till we go and fetch her, and the moment she sees us she runs to meet us, and purrs like a little mill.

She is the merriest, happiest little thing, and everyone loves her. She is called 'Cattie.'

We wonder how it is that when she was born and began her life in a loft and a stable, with a very wild mother, and no people near her, she is so friendly and loving, and so happy with us. She dabs my face with soft little white paws, and kisses me. But her paws are not so white as they should be, as she has not her mother to wash her; and she likes to get into the coal box, and into all the corners, and into every box or basket she sees,—even into the black-lead box! She can now run very fast, and romp all over the room; and she is so fat and round that it is funny to see her running and climbing about.

Little Blackie was taken away too. A man came for him one day, and put him in his pocket and carried him home. Poor Blackie, I am afraid he was terribly frightened and upset; for he spit a great deal (from fright, I think); and the man said he was 'terrible obstinate,' and would not take any food but what they forced down his throat. I am afraid he was not a strong and healthy little kitten, or fit to be independent; for he did not learn to eat or drink, and he was miserable, so that after a while the man who took him away had

to put an end to his poor little life. The other two kittens, and their black mother, still live in the stable; and every day I put a basin of milk for them, and the next day it is all gone. But though the kittens are growing into fine little cats, they are very shy, and if we catch them they are terrified, and cry out, and catch hold of the manger with their little arms, and hold fast, and try to get away. I suppose they will keep their home there, and go out and hunt for food like their mother, and be wild cats all their days. One day Cattie was taken back to see her little sisters; but I am sorry to say she behaved very badly, and when she saw them she growled and spit; and when she saw them washing their faces after their milk, inside the manger, she went to them and lifted her paw and slapped them! But when we brought her back again to the house she was as sweet and charming as ever.

Here ends my little story of Mrs. Wild Cat and her children.

#### TO A BABY.

BABY, thy wonder wakes anew  
My own for lovely things of earth,  
All things that loveliest grew  
Are lovelier for thy birth.

This red rose takes thee with delight  
And revels in thy captured eyes,  
In the dew of thy young sight  
Its freshest beauties rise.

I had forgot the round-eyed days,  
The rapture at life's rainbow gate:  
Thou makest me by thy gaze  
Heir to a lapsed estate.

E. L. H. T.

## Dante and his Work.

### I.—THE POET.



T is most fitting that a publication bearing the name of 'THE HELPER' should contain some account, however brief, of the great Florentine Poet and Teacher. The truest help we can give to others in this world is to introduce them to high thoughts and worthy aims; and to possess even the slightest acquaintance with Dante and his work is to know a helper indeed.

To many, perhaps, he is at present only a name, and that name suggests difficulties and obscurities which make him seem too far off from our practical daily life to have any real personal interest for us. He lived 600 years ago; he wrote in a foreign language, and the range of his activities and his thoughts must, we think, have been out of touch with our English life in the twentieth century. But those who have faced the difficulties, and have set themselves resolutely to learn something of what he was and taught, have found themselves richly rewarded for the effort they have made. The Latin proverb tells us, *Non sine pulvere palma*; i.e., The prize is not won without striving. Dante would be the first to teach us that nothing really worth having can be got without some effort. It is the aim of this brief sketch to inspire some readers with the desire to know more of Dante's teaching, and to

those who listen to him he will without doubt prove (to borrow Bunyan's expressive title) 'one called Help.'

Dante Alighieri lived in stirring times. He was born in Florence in 1265, when Italy was torn by strife between two great factions—Guelphs and Ghibellines; and the different States, besides their warfare with one another, were divided into parties and fighting their fellow-citizens within their own walls. This was the political atmosphere in which he grew to manhood. But life in Italy was not all strife and confusion in those days. The great revival in Art and Letters had begun, and builders, sculptors, painters, and poets were all contributing their share to the beauty of the world.<sup>1</sup> Dante was richly endowed on all sides; he was a soldier, a politician, a philosopher, a man of science, a poet; he loved and appreciated beauty in all forms, music and painting and sculpture and architecture. Few, if any, of the world's greatest men have combined so many gifts and capabilities, and at the same time have been so pre-eminent in one department as he.

In his very early years, the element of romance which was to affect so strongly his whole career, entered into his life. At the age of nine he first met Beatrice Portinari, a little girl a few months younger than himself, and from that time forward she became the object of his chivalrous devotion. We

do not know if there was ever any hope or thought in his heart of marriage between them. Perhaps not; at any rate Beatrice married another man, and died when Dante was twenty-four years old, in 1289, the year in which he fought in his first battle. While she lived he loved and almost worshipped her with the reverent affection and devotion of a deep and passionate nature. After she died he wrote the sweet and charming '*Vita Nuova*' (*i.e.*, 'New Life'), the little book in which he has recorded for all time his love and sorrow for his lost lady. It is the story of an ideal love, not one which looked for any return in personal happiness, but which was content to worship and admire from a distance, and which saw in the loved one a type and symbol of heavenly goodness and wisdom. To Dante, his lady shone from afar as a guiding star, her influence even while she walked the streets of Florence was purifying and ennobling to those who beheld her. It was not possible for low thoughts or desires to continue in her presence:

'Any who endures to gaze on her  
Must either be ennobled, or else die.'<sup>1</sup>

This is a lofty ideal of the love of man for woman, but surely not too high to set before ourselves. Dante alas! was not entirely faithful to it himself, but years after his lady's death, when his feet had wandered into paths away from this upward road of purity and

<sup>1</sup> See 'Stories of the Early Italian Masters,' p. 46.  
EDITOR.

<sup>1</sup> '*Vita Nuova*', translated by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

reverence and self-restraint, he was brought back to it by the thought of Beatrice, and he tells us at the conclusion of the 'Vita Nuova' (A.D. 1300) :

' After writing this sonnet [the last in the book], it was given unto me to behold a very wonderful vision : wherein I saw things which determined me that I would say nothing further of this blessed one, until such time as I could further discourse more worthily concerning her. And to this end I labour all I can : as she well knoweth. Wherefore if it be His pleasure through whom is the life of all things, that my life continue with me for a few years, it is my hope that I shall yet write concerning her what hath not before been written of any woman. After the which, may it seem good unto Him who is the master of grace that my spirit should go hence to behold the glory of its lady : to wit, of that blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His countenance. *Qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus. Laus Deo.*<sup>1</sup>

A very wonderful vision ! Yes, indeed. Perhaps no more wonderful vision has ever been vouchsafed to man than that which has been recorded for us in the 'Divine Comedy' of Dante; and to a short account of this great work the rest of this sketch must be devoted, after enumerating the few outward events of the poet's life.

After the death of Beatrice in 1289, Dante remained in the city of Florence for some twelve years. He was a true patriot, and laboured strenuously for his beloved city, but he was no partizan, and in his impartiality he offended both factions in Florence, and was exiled in 1302 while absent on a

mission to the Pope. The rest of his life was spent in wandering from city to city, now planning movements by which he and his fellow-exiles might secure their return to Florence, and again engaged in diplomatic missions for the different rulers who received him at their courts, or in studying and writing, until death came in 1321, to bring peace to his passionate and sorely tried heart. He died an exile, at Ravenna. No means of return which he could honourably accept had been offered, and he never saw Florence again. Before his exile he had married a lady named Gemma Donati, but his wife and six children were left behind him, and little is known with certainty as to his home and married life.

## II.—HIS 'VERY WONDERFUL VISION.'

So much for Dante's outward life ; what had been the course of his inner development through the years between 1289 and 1321 ? It may largely be gathered from the 'Divine Comedy,' most subjective of poems, and from his other works. We see in the early years, love and sorrow and loyalty to high ideals ; then a falling away to self-pleasing and lower aims ; a recall in the year 1300 by the 'very wonderful vision' ; but no full return of the whole nature, now deepened and developed by discipline and suffering, to God and goodness, until perhaps the last seven years of his life, during which the great abiding work, the ripe fruit of all his experience, was

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. The concluding words mean 'Who is blessed throughout all ages. Praise be to God !'

being prepared. Then, when the last lines of the 'Paradiso' have been written, 'after the discipline and disappointments of a life time, Dante dies a broken-hearted exile, yet victorious and at peace.'

DANTE has himself told us what is the subject matter of the 'Divine Comedy.'—'Man, in the exercise of his free-will, rendering himself liable to rewarding and punitive justice.' It is so far an allegory that, though the outward form chosen is to Dante literally true, as to the condition of souls after death in Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, yet the teaching conveyed is of wider and deeper import than this. From the 'Comedy' we learn what sin is, in its essence, and in its consequences, what God is, what we ourselves are, and God's purpose for us. It really covers the whole range of spiritual philosophy, and the problems which have most exercised the minds of men in all times are brought before us in succession, and light shines upon them from the brightness of Dante's genius, and from his deep insight into eternal realities.

The story of the poem is briefly this: Dante tells that 'midway in the journey of this life' (*i.e.*, at the age of 35, A.D. 1300) he finds himself lost in the mazes of a gloomy forest, by which are typified the error and moral deterioration into which he had fallen when he was recalled by his great vision. He was apparently in danger of moral shipwreck, when God sent him heavenly

aid. His lady Beatrice, who had been his highest influence on earth, still concerns herself for him from her place in heaven, and commissions Virgil, the poet who had sung the story of the foundation of Rome, to guide Dante through the unseen worlds, that he may learn before it is too late what is the true destiny of man, and what are the eternal consequences of his actions during this probation life.

According to the beliefs of the time, these unseen worlds, peopled by the spirits of the departed, were three in number—Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven; the first the abode of unrepentant sinners, the second of penitent sinners, the third of those penitents who have passed through their period of purgation. Of these Hell and Heaven are eternal, and Purgatory is only temporary, the spirits sojourning there for a shorter or longer time, according to their merits or demerits, but all eventually to pass on to the light and joy of Paradise. Hell is pictured as a subterranean abyss, Purgatory as a mountain on an island in the sea, Paradise of course among the starry heavens.

Dante follows Virgil then on his momentous journey. First downwards to the very centre of the earth, where he is shown the darkness, the suffering, the despair among the lost souls; those who in this life have chosen darkness rather than light, who have misused their free-will, have set themselves in opposition to God's gracious purpose for them, and have died unrepentant

and unforgiven. It is an awful picture of sin and its attendant misery.

Down, down they go through ever narrowing circles, and ever intensified wickedness and pain. To many this part of the poem is so terrible that they cannot bring themselves to read it to the end. To others it is the most dramatic and interesting of the three divisions, and to the majority perhaps the '*Inferno*' is most closely connected with their thought of Dante's work. But to the true and reverent student of the '*Divine Comedy*' neither attitude of mind is possible. The '*Inferno*' must be read fearlessly, every word of it, if we would enter into the master's mind. It is the essential complement of the other two canticas. Unless we have grasped the true hatefulness of sin, and its alienation from God, we are not really prepared to appreciate the beauty and hope of the hill of Purgatory, or the glorious fruition of Paradise. But it is only a preparation for what is to follow, the dark background which serves to emphasize the brightness of the succeeding pictures. He would have missed Dante's meaning indeed who should leave off with the '*Inferno*'.

Smoke-stained, tear-stained, weary, oppressed and disgusted, Dante follows his guide through circle after circle of unrepentant and despairing sinners; and at length is allowed, after the lowest depth of all, 'to issue forth and re-behold the stars.' Henceforth his face will be turned upward. He does not, he never can forget what he has

seen; it has been burnt into his inmost consciousness, but it has been left behind him for ever.

The next stage of his journey is up the Mountain of Purification. Rising from the shores of the trembling sea, its steep terraces are open to the light of day, and on circle after circle he sees and converses with the spirits of those who have died in penitence and hope, and are now suffering indeed, but suffering willingly the penalty of their sins, which they know is preparing them to enter, when it may be, into the presence of God. Penitence, humility, and hope, these are the keynotes of Purgatory. Guardian angels stand at the gate of every circle to speed the penitent sinner upwards; every new pilgrim is welcomed by the '*Te Deum*', everyone whose course of purification is over leaves the mountain with the '*Gloria in Excelsis*' sounding in his ears. Dante climbs on and up, still following his guide, and ever finding the ascent less wearisome, till at the summit where all pain and effort are left behind, he finds himself in the Garden of Eden, the earthly Paradise, which may in the allegory represent the ordered life of obedience and righteousness.

Here Virgil leaves him. According to Dante's creed no unbaptized person, however righteous, may pass on into the third and highest of the three worlds unseen. For this Dante must have another guide, and it is Beatrice herself who comes to lead him through Paradise. Before this final revelation, Dante is compelled by his loved and

lost and now recovered lady, to confess his past sins, his unfaithfulness to the high ideals which she had ever held up before him. Then he is bathed in purifying waters, and begins his flight upwards to the heavenly spheres. Here in peace and joy, in light and love and fruition, are the blest souls who have chosen the better part, who have responded to God's designs for them, and are now reunited with Him for ever. From heaven to heaven Dante is carried on, holding converse on high and holy themes with bright spirits in the different spheres, till he is brought to the consummation of his vision, and for one brief transcendent moment sees GOD as He is. Then 'the power of the lofty vision fails,' the goal is attained, his will is one with God's Will, and he can return to earth to give his message to the hearts of men.

Those who have read the 'Divine Comedy' will know the impossibility of giving even a bare outline of the poem, within the limits of a paper like this. But they will also know the urgent impulse which prompts the humblest disciple of Dante to make the great master better known to others. It is a great and solemn responsibility, and one for which we must surely give account, to have thus had the veil drawn for us which hides the deepest things of God, to be shown the tremendous, the eternal consequences of our life here, and the great and lofty purpose for which each human soul has been created. No word has been said

here of the exquisite descriptions of nature, of child-life and bird-life, of sunrise and sunset, of music and dancing, of the countless poetical beauties of this great work. Dante has been only spoken of as a prophet; 'one who speaks for God.' If any readers of THE HELPER should be led to study the 'Divine Comedy' in consequence of this brief sketch, they will find therein a mine of priceless wealth. In the great master's teaching they will find strength to their souls, and a fresh impulse along the upward path which leads, as it led Dante of old, at last to the Paradise of GOD.

R. E. S.

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#### A LITTLE PARABLE.

On my study shelf is a matchbox with a little piece of white glass in front, and this white glass has a way of drinking in the light when the sun shines; so that when the sun has set and the room grows dark, that little panel of glass sends out a glow, feeble it is true, but enough to show me where the matches are, although I cannot see the box itself. That is how the disciples glowed with goodness after being in the light of the life and love of Jesus; and any divine influence will do likewise with us, making us in our measure sources of divine light in the world. Whenever I hear of great writers and poets like Tennyson, Arnold, Macaulay, and Longfellow 'steeping' themselves in the works of the great men of old time, so as to be lifted up by communion with them, 'I think—'There is a lesson for me. If I really wish to be a Christian I must keep near to those who are most like Christ.' But If I neglect to do so, my life grows dim, as the panel on the matchbox does, if it is turned away from the light.

## Leaves: their Work and Beauty.

BY THE REV. THOMAS ROBINSON.



Bramble Leaf.

### I.—LEAVES.

**W**HAT is a leaf? This seems a simple question to ask, which any child of five years of age might answer, and yet it is not so simple after all.

I know a child nearly fifty years old—who calls himself a man, and yet cannot tell *all* that a leaf is.

It is one thing to pick a flat green blade growing at the end of a stalk from any plant which is near at hand, and say:—‘Why, *this* is a leaf’; but it is quite another thing to be able to say not only what is a leaf, but what a leaf really *is*, what it *can* do, *how* it does its work, what are its *uses*, what is its *shape*, and *why* it takes just that particular shape.

There was a time when leaves were ‘only leaves’ to me. I did not think them particularly interesting or worth knowing about. I only had a small and poor idea of leaves, thinking they made the trees look beautiful in spring, and kept the sun off in summer, and that was about all. I had no idea how important a leaf really is. Now I know better!

Instead of saying when I see a plant without flowers, or fruit on it,—‘Oh! *only* leaves, what a poor useless plant,’ I just think a little while, and generally find that plants with ‘only leaves’ are hard workers and very useful, making life possible

to a host of ‘mere animals,’ and I end by finding that I myself am one of the mere animals that plants bearing only leaves help to keep alive and well and happy.

For, let me tell you, leaves, green leaves, are the life-makers of the earth. I have read somewhere that there are nearly twenty-five millions of square miles of green leaves on the land surface of the earth! Can you imagine it? I cannot, it is too vast! Twenty-five million square miles. Just try to imagine a leaf a mile long and a mile wide, ‘as green as grass.’ Then imagine a hundred such; then a thousand such; then a thousand thousand, which would make *one* million, and there would have to be twenty-five thousand thousand such square mile leaves to equal the green leaf surface of the earth.

Of course all this area is divided into untold myriads of tiny leaves, blades of grass, ferns, mosses, pine needles, lily leaves, blades of corn, oak leaves, elm leaves, palm leaves, daisy and dandelion leaves. Leaves everywhere, nearly;—high up on the mountain as well as in the moist meadows and valleys,—in the desert, by the sea shore, at the Equator, and even near the Poles. Everywhere, wherever the sunlight can reach and moisture is to be found there are leaves.

And they are life-manufacturers—these green leaves. Far back,—so far back that it is not possible for me to tell you, for I do not know,—far back this beautiful earth which we call *ours*, with its birds and butterflies, its oxen

and sheep and goats,—its wild animals, lions, tigers, crocodiles, snakes, and fishes; and with its forests and meadows, trees, shrubs, and flowers,—was an empty and barren earth. Not an animal, not a plant! How it came about we cannot tell, we cannot even imagine,—God only knows; but there did come at length a speck of life,—a green, something, probably that was *alive*, in what before had been a lifeless world. Poor lonely little speck of life—all by itself,—with no father or mother, no brother or sister, no companion,—just a tiny experiment in living.

Now that speck of life was, as we think, the origin of living things, from it came all the plants that have been and are, and from it, or something very like it, came all the animals that have been and are.

The animals could not have existed at all without the help of that green speck and its descendants, for it is they, the green speck’s descendants, which are the green-leaved plants which, by the work done by the leaves, have learnt out of lifeless things to produce the life-material of all that lives—animals as well as plants.

This is hard to understand—very hard; but when once we do understand it, a great light seems to break upon life and its meanings. By a wonderful power which the green matter in plants and leaves possesses, they can take out of the air a certain gas which is mixed with the air, and which is called *carbonic acid*, and can

use the carbonic acid, along with moisture, to form all sorts of substances needed by the plant in its growth ; and many of these substances are useful, and not merely useful, but absolutely necessary as the food of animals. Hence plants *grow*, and support themselves and all the animals as well by using things that are *not* alive —to form something that *is* alive. And it is the leaves chiefly which carry on this wonderful work. When the sun shines, or when there is daylight, those twenty-five million square miles of leaf-surface spread themselves out to catch the carbonic acid and the sunlight, and to manufacture rice, and potatoes, wheat, nuts, fruit, oils, scents, sugar, and such a multitude of other good and useful things that a whole volume of THE HELPER would not contain a list of them. So when you gather flowers or fruit, and perhaps throw away the leaves because they are *only leaves*, please to remember that without the leaves there would have been no flowers, and no fruits ; without the leaves no timber for the building of houses and of ships, and the making of furniture ; without green leaves or grass no cattle and indeed no animal life at all ; without green leaves in the far-off ages there would have been no coal. All these things, and nearly everything else except metals and minerals, we owe to leaves,—‘only leaves.’

So now if we are asked, What is a leaf ? the question and its answer will

put us on the track of every living thing, for the leaf is the benefactor of all. Busy all day as long as there is light, taking out of the air a gas which is poisonous to animals if they breathe it, the leaves convert the poisonous gas into wholesome foods, or useful wood and coal. If he who serveth is to be honoured, what shall we honour more than the leaf of the tree and the grass on which all life depends.

When spring comes, and everywhere the green buds are bursting out, think of the thousand thousands of square miles of busy work just beginning. Jesus said once, ‘I must work the work of Him who sent me while it is day—the night cometh when no man can work.’ And if the leaves could think and choose a favourite text, surely that would be the one they would choose for a motto, for they work the work of God who sends them while it is day,—and when the night cometh they rest.

## II.—How LEAVES WORK.

Now let us try to learn how the leaves manage to do so much work in life-making and in providing foods and other things needful for all animal life as well.

By far the greatest number of leaves are green. There are some plants which bear leaves which are variegated, and some which have leaves of quite another colour, but they are so few compared with the *green* leaves that we need not at present consider them. When first the buds open on

the hedges and trees in April and May they are a lovely fresh bright green. This turns darker in June and July; and then in September and October the green colour changes to yellow, orange, russet-brown, or red. When this is the case the leaves have done their work—they can no longer build up food stuffs or life substance; they are ready to wither, and fall off dead. It is the *green* leaf, then, that does the work. It would be more correct to say that it is a green *something* in the leaf which does the work, and at the same time gives to the leaves their colour. This substance we will call ‘leaf-green’ (or *chlorophyll*, if you want to use a long word. It is Greek, and means the same thing.)

Leaves are built up of a great number of very small compartments with their walls. Inside each compartment is a small quantity of a clear jelly which is *alive*. *It is the only living substance in the world.* It exists not only in plants, but in each and every animal. The living part of you and of me, and of all living things, is just this jelly-like substance, which has been called *Protoplasm* (more Greek! We may call it ‘first-stuff’). And mixed with this protoplasm in the green parts

of plants—especially the leaves—is a quantity of that substance which we called ‘leaf-green’ (*chlorophyll*). Now



Spray of Tormentil.

when the sun shines, that is when there is daylight whether the sun shines brightly or not, this leaf-green sets to work conjuring in a most myste-

rious and marvellous manner. It captures the poisonous gas, *carbonic acid*, which is composed of one part of carbon and two of oxygen, and it gets hold of the moisture which the roots of the plant draw from the moist ground, and it plays with these things and works with them and makes such a lot of different substances, needful for the plant, that it would only puzzle you (and me too !) if I tried to tell you all. Perhaps the substance most largely formed is starch; sugar is another, made of exactly the same materials as starch, only differently combined.

Now, in working with carbonic acid, the leaf-green does not need all the oxygen, so it takes away and keeps the carbon, and lets oxygen go free. I don't think men and women and children know how much they owe to the leaves for this. Carbonic acid is a very poisonous gas; it is the carbonic acid which makes the air so bad in a closed room full of people. Everybody cries out for the windows to be opened. Heads begin to ache, and people get drowsy, and perhaps faint away; and indeed they would die, because of the carbonic acid in the room, if the windows and doors were not opened.

But where does the bad gas come from? From the lungs of the people themselves! When we breathe we are taking in oxygen, the oxygen joins with carbon in our bodies, and for every one part of carbon two of oxygen are needful to form the carbonic acid, and this is breathed out by all the

people in the room, and things get from bad to worse. But when the windows are opened, the bad gas escapes, and good air comes in, and all goes well.

But where has the bad gas gone? Mixed in the open air it is carried and spread abroad, and gets where there are green leaves, and the leaf-green captures it from the air and picks it to pieces and makes good food-stuff of part of it, and lets the pure oxygen which is not required go back into the open air, ready to be used again by the breathing animals.

In big towns and cities, if they are wise, the people keep open spaces, parks and gardens and squares,—and plant them with trees, and let the green grass grow; and they plant avenues of trees in the streets also. Can you tell why? Is it not that the leaves may help to purify the air and keep it sweet? If they did nothing else, we might well be grateful to the plants and trees for bearing the busy, useful, hard-working green leaves which purify the air we breathe. I have read somewhere that the quantity of carbonic acid the leaves have to deal with daily, all over the earth, amounts to forty-five million tons! We cannot form any idea of this vast amount or of the space it would occupy if all brought into one place—but it is mixed with the air, and in such a small proportion, that if you took a thousand parts, only four of them would be carbonic acid, and all the rest good air. How clever, then, must

those leaves be in capturing the carbonic acid. They have no legs or wings—they are fixed in one place by stalk and stem, and branch and trunk of trees. All they can do is to spread themselves to catch the sunlight and the passing breeze, and *seize their opportunity*.

There is a little moral here, is there not? For people who are wise, even though they have disadvantages, the opportunity comes, and, if they are ready, they can catch it and use it for their own good and the good of others, just as the leaves do when there is daylight. I believe that every good worker, even when he is working as he thinks only for his own advantage, is still also helping others as well. But when we bear in mind all that we owe to the green leaves, which, working for the benefit of the community to which they belong, that is, the plant which bears them, make life possible for every other living thing, we admire and wonder and love them, but we wonder and reverence and love their Maker very much more.

### III.—THE SHAPES OF LEAVES.

Of all beautiful things there are few more beautiful than leaves. Flowers, I know, have more admirers, especially among the young folk, who love bright colours. And fruits also are a delight to many who revel in sweet tastes. And indeed I doubt if ever the time will come when flowers and

fruits will lose their charm for some of us older children.

But whilst we love the flowers and enjoy the fruits, we cannot but admire and wonder at the leaves, whose good work it has been to prepare for the flowers, and to fill the swelling fruit after the flowers have fallen.

Still it is not so much for their usefulness in this way of producing fruit and seed that I want to claim your admiration for the leaves, but because of the wonderful way in which various plants bear just the sort of leaf best adapted to the place and circumstances in which those plants generally grow.

For instance—remember that leaves have to make the most of sunlight and of the carbonic acid in the air, and, if either of these be hard to get, the leaves must adapt themselves to these hard conditions.

If there be plenty of air and of sunlight easily to be obtained, and no crowding and pushing to get it, then the leaves are broad, large, and plain. Thus, as there are few plants that can live with their roots in deep water, and send up leaves to the surface, there will not be much crowding in such places. This is the case with the water lily, which has very few rivals in the matter of sunshine and open air, so the leaves are large and plain-edged, that is, with no indentations. How luxuriously those beautiful water-lily leaves repose on the surface of the pond! They can afford it, they are 'well off,' they 'roll in riches' of sunshine and fresh air.

But where many plants grow close together, and have almost to fight for

most of them have taken to growing slender, narrow leaves pointing straight upward, like the blades of grass, and the sedges and flags. Or if they do not do so, their leaves become divided into lobes or fingers, or still more divided into leaflets like the little geranium which goes by the name of Herb Robert.

Perhaps the most lovely leaves which grow in shady places, and so need to be much divided, are those of ferns, called fronds, and the finely divided branching mosses.

I wonder if you have ever noticed that there are two<sup>1</sup> ways in which leaves divide themselves up into lobes and leaflets. In order properly to understand how this happens, we must learn a little about the anatomy of leaves.

Most leaves have a stalk (or 'petiole' as it is sometimes called, from the Latin for 'little-foot'), and this stalk carries the broad part of the leaf—called the blade or *lamina* (again Latin, for 'thin-plate'). This



Fig. 1. Black Poplar Leaf.

air and sunshine, it would never do for all of them to be broad and lie flat, so

<sup>1</sup>This applies to dicotyledonous plants, but it would confuse the scholars to dilate upon the distinction.

lamina is usually thin, and you can trace, often, the continuation of the thicker stalk in the mid-rib which extends to the tip of the leaf. This mid-rib gives off side branches, and these in turn give off smaller branchlets. Often we call these 'veins,' or 'nerves,' but really they are in no way like either veins or nerves. They consist of cells which are elongated, and are harder, stronger, more woody than the rest of the leaf. Their work is to support the softer portions of the leaf consisting of the cells which hold the living protoplasm and the leaf-green (chlorophyll). They have also to supply the leaf with moisture which their roots send up.

I have seen 'skeletons' prepared by letting leaves decay in water and then washing away the decayed cells and leaving only the woody fibrous ribs and ripples. Very interesting, and often very beautiful, these skeleton

leaves are, and they give us a good idea how leaves are built up in such a way that the 'veinings' shall be evenly

distributed, and not crowded in some places and wanting in others. I have drawn some blackboard illustrations



Fig. II. Sapling Wych Elm Leaf.

for you to copy—one is the skeleton leaf of a black poplar, another of a sapling wych elm, and the third

of a strawberry. [Figs. I., II., and III.]

I want you to note in these draw-



Fig. III. Strawberry Leaf.

ings, which are rather carefully made, that, in the poplar and wych elm, the side ribs do not all start from one common point, but branch off in suc-

cession: whilst in the strawberry two of the chief ribs start off from the point where the leaf blade begins. In fact, all three ribs start at the same place. Leaves in which the main ribs all start from the same point are said to be *palmate*, or 'finger veined,' as I have heard them called. Leaves in which there is only one main rib, giving off a series of side ribs in pairs like a feather, are called *pinnate*, or 'feather veined.'

It is a most delightful plan to gather leaves and arrange them in two series,—the palmate and the pinnate, putting each set in order, beginning with the plainest and ending with those most divided up into lobes and leaflets. The two series of photographs which I have made to

illustrate this plan are taken from leaves gathered in a single ramble and hastily pinned on a sheet of drawing paper to be photographed before they



LEAVES OF A FERN



LEAVES OF A FERN

all three ribs start at the same place. Leaves in which the main ribs all start from the same point are said to be *palmate* or "finger" as I have

seen them which there is only one main rib, giving off a series of side ribs in pairs like feather are called



#### PINNATE LEAVES.

Rhododendron.  
Spanish Chestnut.  
Oak.  
Wild and Garden Rose.

Ash.  
Dandelion.  
Silver Weed  
Yarrow.



#### PALMATE LEAVES.

Tropaeolum.  
Geranium (Pelargonium).  
Coltsfoot.  
Plane.

Ivy.  
Sycamore.  
Horse Chestnut.  
Buttercup.



had time to wither. (See pictures of 'Pinnate' and 'Palmate' leaves.)

Sometimes you will be interested to find that leaves at different parts of the same plant differ not only in size, but also in the degree in which they are indented. Ivy leaves growing against a wall are rather deeply lobed or fingered, but when the ivy has reached the top of the wall, and grows above it freely, its leaves tend to lose these indentations and to become very plain-edged. If you look at the illustration of the tormentil also (see Lesson II., page 81) you will note a difference between the leaves low down on the stem of the plant and those at the tips of the branches. Still with all their differences we find that they are all palmate, and do not change to the pinnate.

There is a third method of veining found in which, instead of branching, the veins or ribs run side by side from base to tip of the leaf. Leaves which follow this method are called 'parallel veined.' They belong to the class of plants called monocotyledons. Examples may be found in all the grasses and sedges—the hyacinths and lilies.

Before I conclude this lesson, I want to say how greatly the drawing of leaves will increase your interest in them. Perhaps you never tried this, and think it would be difficult. Yes, some leaves are very difficult indeed—and some are very *easy*. Try the easy ones first,—a 'nasturtium' leaf or a laurel—outline first, then veinings. Next go on to a 'geranium' leaf and

an oak leaf—and so on to more difficult forms. In this way you will soon find what a great variety there is in leaf forms; and if you can puzzle out the reason for these differences and find, as you will do, that the reason for the difference is a good one, and a wise one, you will feel that these good reasons and wise ones carry your thought to the Being who has put into every blade of grass and leaf of tree the power to fit itself for the life it has to live. That Being has put into you also the power to fit yourself for your present life, and to prepare yourself for a nobler and higher way of living. If the leaves can do it—so can you.

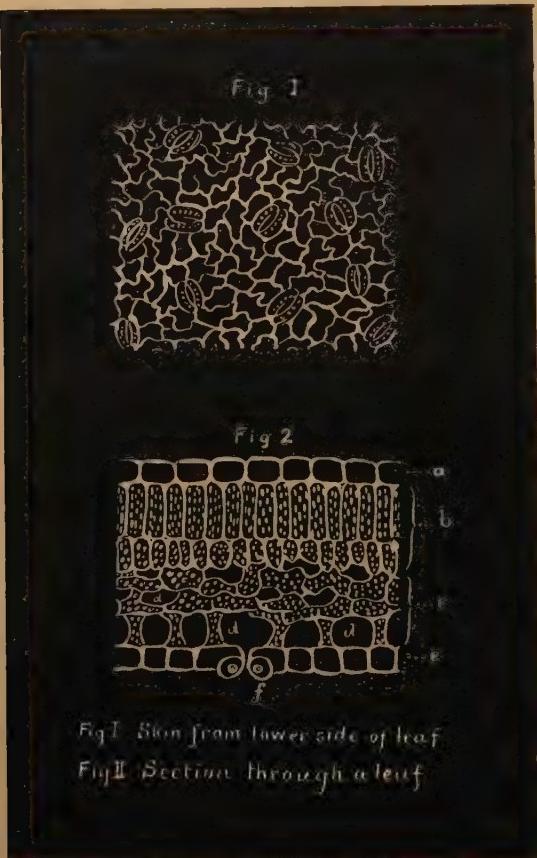
#### IV.—THE INSIDE OF A LEAF.

In this last Lesson on Leaves, I want to tell you what there is *inside* a leaf, that is, the part that lies between the upper and under surfaces of the leaf.

There cannot be very much, you think, perhaps, seeing that a leaf is generally so flat and thin. 'Thin as a leaf,' people say sometimes, and yet if we take a sharp knife and take a very thin slice, cutting right through the leaf from upper to lower side, we find quite a number of beautiful and interesting structures lying between, when we look at the slice through a powerful microscope.

I cut just such a section of a leaf to-day, and it looks only like a slightly flattened hair until I put it under the microscope. What it looks like when magnified, you will see in the sketch I

have made—[Fig. 2.]—only my sketch is white on black, and the section was,



The Inside of a Leaf.

most of it, of a lovely green colour. All the dotted parts of the sketch ought

to be coloured bright grass green. Now if you will look at my drawing, I will describe it, so that you may understand what lies between the two surfaces of most leaves.

First, there is the *Epidermis* (Greek, ‘top-skin’), that is, the skin, (a) made up of clear transparent cells filled with water. The water is drawn up from the roots and stem of the plant by what is called capillary attraction. It fills this upper layer of cells, and as water has a great attraction for carbonic acid, it serves to capture the food gas which the leaf needs, and to pass it on to the next layer of cells below (b).

These cells which you see closely packed together contain protoplasm (that is, the *living matter* of the plant), and the protoplasm again contains the leaf-green (chlorophyll)—that mysterious wonder-worker which can take lifeless matter and convert it into food stuffs, and with the help of the protoplasm can turn these food stuffs into living matter.<sup>1</sup>

Now, these closely-set cells rob the skin cells of their collected carbonic acid, and in sunlight (always in the

<sup>1</sup> For this latter transformation nitrogen obtained from the soil is necessary, but to include this in the lesson would only confuse the children.

sunlight!) pick it to pieces and keep the carbon, but let the oxygen go, as before stated. Then they take some of the water also, which is composed of two parts of hydrogen and one of oxygen, and use the hydrogen along with the carbon and a little oxygen to make starch and other substances needed by the plant. Here it is, then, that the food-making of the world is chiefly carried on, just below the upper leaf skin.

The green chlorophyll cells become less crowded below (c)—in fact, there are here comparatively large empty spaces—(d)—between the cells, and these spaces, which make the lower part of the leaf spongy, are useful to carry off superfluous moisture, and also for the escape of unnecessary oxygen.

Lastly, we come upon another layer of clear transparent colourless cells, the lower leaf skin or epidermis—(e).—This skin we notice in the drawing has, at one place, an opening guarded by two small circular guard cells—(f). It is through this and similar openings that the unnecessary moisture and the oxygen gas are transpired, *i.e.*, breathed out into the open air. Perhaps sometimes carbonic acid is taken in at these openings also, but their chief function is to regulate the amount of moisture in the leaf.

My sketch shows only one opening; but really there are thousands on the under-side of nearly every leaf, and great numbers also on the upper-side, and even on green stems and the other

green parts of plants. The upper drawing—(Fig. 1)—is of a very small piece of the skin peeled off the lower side of a leaf and greatly magnified. It represents a piece that would not cover a hole made in a piece of paper with a fine needle, and yet there are twelve of the oval mouths, or stomata, and nearly one hundred of the clear transparent skin cells! A square inch of skin from the under-side of a lilac leaf would contain a quarter of a million ‘mouths,’ and how many of the other cells I cannot tell you—there are too many! Think of it! All those little mouths guarded by two lips that open in moist weather and shut up in dry weather, so that the leaf may not too quickly lose its moisture and wither. All those little mouths breathing out oxygen to renew the air which we need and which all other animals need. It takes one’s breath away to think of those twenty-five millions of square miles of green leaf in the world, with about a quarter of a million breathing pores per square inch, and each pore responding to every change of the light and the air around.

Who shall tell me leaves are not worth some careful study? Who shall dare say ‘only leaves’ and never care to know that on leaves only the life and well-being of all that lives depends? For food and for pure air and for all the beauty of spring-tide we have to thank the leaves, and the best way to do this is to study them and understand them, and love them and cherish them.

And for the leaves we have to thank their wise Designer, not only with words, but with eager, earnest, searching eyes and minds—striving to find Him in His works, and knowing right well that as we reverently learn and comprehend more and more of His works our reverence and love for Him will grow, and we shall care more and more to ‘dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple,’ which temple is this beautiful and glorious world in which it is so good to dwell.

Hath not thy heart within thee burned  
At evening’s calm and holy hour,  
As if its inmost depths discerned  
The presence of a loftier power ?

Hast thou not heard ’mid forest glades,  
While ancient rivers murmured by,  
A voice from forth the eternal shades  
That spake a present Deity ?

It was the voice of God that spake  
In silence to thy silent heart,  
And bade each worthier thought awake,  
And every dream of earth depart.

Voice of our God, oh yet be near !  
In low, sweet accents whisper peace ;  
Direct us on our pathway here,  
Then bid in heaven our wanderings cease.

[NOTE FOR TEACHERS.—These four somewhat disjointed lessons have been written under circumstances of considerable difficulty. It is their spirit and intention that can make them of any use, rather than the precise information they contain. For more accurate and detailed notes on leaves, and indeed on plants generally, and on

flowers, which are composed of modified leaves, I would recommend as very excellent and very cheap the following hand-books :—Grant Allen’s ‘Story of the Plants,’ 9d. net; G. Henslow’s ‘Story of Wild Flowers,’ 9d. net. These are both published by George Newnes, Limited, in the Useful Story Series. I can also hardly too highly recommend Eleanor Hughes-Gibbs’ ‘How Plants Live and Work,’ (C. Griffin and Co., Limited).—T. R.]

#### HAVE FAITH IN THE CHILD.

You must have faith in the child whom you instruct. Believe in the greatness of its nature and in its capacity of improvement. Do not measure its mind by its frail, slender form. In a very few years, in ten years perhaps, that child is to come forward into life, to take on him the duties of an arduous vocation, to assume serious responsibilities ; and soon after he may be the head of a family and have a voice in the Government of the country. All the powers which he is to put forth in life, all the powers which are to be unfolded in his endless being, are now wrapt up within him. That mind, not you, nor I, nor an angel, can comprehend. Have faith in his nature, especially as fitted for religion.

. . . . . Have faith in the child ; not that it is virtuous and holy at birth ; for virtue or holiness is not, cannot be born with us, but is a free voluntary effort of a being who knows the distinction of right and wrong, and who, if tempted, adheres to the right ; but have faith in the child as capable of knowing and loving the good and the true, as having a conscience to take the side of duty, as open to ingenuous motives for well-doing, as created for knowledge, wisdom, piety, and disinterested love.—CHANNING.

## What it means to be a Unitarian.

NOTES FOR ONE OR MORE DISCOURSES  
TO CHILDREN.

1. **W**e are Unitarians, the people who come to this chapel and teach in this Sunday school, and though we are glad to see any boys or girls whose parents send them, and though we don't want them to take a name because they come to us, yet we suppose they are Unitarians, and we teach them Unitarian Christianity.

2. Some people don't like the name. They would rather be just called 'Christians,' and nothing else. But Christians who don't pray to Jesus Christ are not like other Christians, and they will get a distinct name whether they like it or not. So people will call us Unitarians whether we like it or not. The best thing we can do is to make them understand what Unitarianism is, and to do that we must understand it first ourselves.

3. What is a Unitarian?

[Try to get answers from the scholars. They will be almost sure to tell you what Unitarians *don't believe*.]

4. Yes, quite true. A Unitarian doesn't believe—

That there are three persons in one God.

That Jesus of Nazareth was God and man.

That the Father was angry with all men for their sins, and that Jesus

suffered and died to reconcile Him to them.

That the Bible is all true from beginning to end, and all the Word of God.

[Of course this may be developed to any extent; it might well be the subject of a separate or of many separate lessons or sermons. Remember that if more advanced people have given up many of the old doctrines, and especially eternal punishment, these are still taught both in school and chapel, and very commonly believed among the poor.]

5. But if you don't believe any of these things does that make you a Unitarian? [Answers will probably be hesitating and unsatisfactory.] Well, suppose a man is not a Russian, and is not a German, and is not an Italian, or a Spaniard, or a Frenchman, does that make him an Englishman? [No.] And if a man is not a Roman Catholic, and not a Presbyterian, and not a Methodist, and not a Baptist, etc., does that make him a Unitarian? [Answers probably, No.]

Right. Not-Being is nothing, and can't make anything. Not being red or green or blue, etc., doesn't make a thing white.

And Not-Believing is a kind of Not-Being, and it doesn't do anything and can't. *It's what we believe that makes us what we are, not what we don't believe.*

6. So a Unitarian is one who does believe. In what?

[Try to get answers; probably someone will say, 'He believes in God.')

Yes. Unitarians are free men, and they have no creed that they all repeat together; but all the same they agree in many things, and the first and most important is that they believe in one God, and that God is good. And if boy or girl, man or woman, does really believe this much—that there is a Wise and Mighty One, who knows each of us and all our thoughts and doings, and loves us, and wishes our good, and is ready to help and pardon—it does not matter so very much what else they believe.

Still it is right, and it is in its way important, that we should believe what is true, and that we should not believe what is false. And Unitarians try in everything to find out—not what other people say or think, but just what is true.

So they ask, What is the truth, the thing that really was, about Jesus Christ, about his birth and his miracles, and his resurrection from the dead?

And so of all other things that have to do with religion—about the creation of the world, and Adam and Eve, and the old stories of the Bible, and the writers of its various books, and what they believed and taught. Unitarians don't ask—What does the Church tell us? or what does our denomination teach? or what did Dr. Priestley or Dr. Martineau, or Channing or Parker say? but what is the fact?

And as they are all seeking, instead of following somebody else, they go different ways and come to believe

different things. But as I have already said, all of them believe that God is and that God is good.

7. But there is something more wanted to make anyone a good Unitarian.

Suppose a man has been born in England of English parents. Of course he is an Englishman. But if he was always talking against liberty and independence, and progress and the people's rights; if he professed that he preferred an absolute monarchy like that of Russia to our English form of government, and that he would compel everybody to be of the same religion, and that the common people ought to be subject to those better off than themselves, and that nothing should be printed in books or newspapers without leave of the authorities—well, we should say such a man was English by birth, but that he was a foreigner in spirit, that there was nothing of the true Englishman in him.

It's just so of Unitarians.

A man doesn't believe in the Trinity and he does believe in God. He is a Unitarian. Yes, but suppose he is narrow and bigoted and dogmatic; suppose he is always saying how silly people are who don't believe as he does, and that what he believes is the whole truth; suppose he despises all the good and wise people who belong to other churches, and says they must be either fools or knaves, and thinks himself and those who agree with him to be the only people who are sensible—that kind of man or woman is indeed Uni-

tarian by belief, but he has the spirit of a Papist or Presbyterian of the bad old times of intolerance and persecution.

The true Unitarian holds his own faith in all humility, conscious how little he knows and how liable he is to err. And he respects the liberty of other men to hold their faith, and as long as they hold it honestly and devoutly he treats it with reverence, because it is their way of drawing near to God.

So to conclude—

A good Unitarian is one who

(1) Does not believe in the Trinity, in the Godhead of Jesus, in Hell, etc.

(2) Does believe in God, as Jesus taught us of Him, the Father in Heaven, who loves and cares for us more than the very best earthly father ever did.

(3) Holds his own faith humbly and firmly, while he respects the genuine belief of all other people, even of those who differ from him most.

[Try to get them to say these three conditions of being a good Unitarian after you, putting them as briefly and simply as you can.]

CHARLES HARGROVE.

WE BELIEVE IN—

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD ;  
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN ;  
THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS ;  
THE SUPREMACY OF CHARACTER ;  
AND THE PROGRESS OF SOULS,

ONWARD AND UPWARD FOR EVER.

*From the Service Book used at Chowbent Sunday School.*

## Parables.

There is a book, who runs may read,  
Which heavenly Truth imparts ;  
And all the lore its scholars need,  
Pure eyes and Christian hearts.

KEBLE.

There is no creature so small and mean,  
that it doth not show forth the goodness  
of God.—THOMAS A KEMPIS.

 E all find it difficult to say exactly what a Parable is. It is not easy, I admit, to separate the Parable from the Simile and the Fable and the Allegory and the Proverb, but, in ordinary teaching, we need not attempt quite so much. The point to be seized, and kept in view, is this: that a parable is simply a *likeness*. From a ‘likeness’ of an unseen person—a photograph, say, a scrap of paper touched with light and chemicals—we can gather something of his character and disposition, something of those qualities of mind and soul which do not belong to the world of matter at all, and therefore cannot really be put on paper and presented to the eye. In the same way, the natural things around us—the things we see, and hear, and handle—are constantly exhibiting ‘likenesses’ to us of the nature and ways of God, and of the nature and ways of our own souls—that is to say, ‘likenesses’ of things spiritual. ‘The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made.’

Art shows the beauty of things, and science their wonder, and religion their underlying meaning—and never more effectively than in parables.

The recorded parables of Jesus Christ are between thirty and forty in number. They were not all spoken to the same people, nor were they spoken in the same place. They were drawn from the lives and occupations of the men and women who happened at the time to be standing by, and were specially intended for them. To show this, you may group them on a black-board, somewhat in this way:—

PARABLES OF TOWN LIFE.	PARABLES OF COUNTRY LIFE.
Making Money.	Ploughing.
Collecting debts.	Sowing.
Building houses.	Reaping.
Giving feasts.	Threshing.
Begging food.	Vine-dressing.
Waiting on a bridegroom.	Sheep-tending.
Praying in the temple.	Trees. Birds. Flowers.
PARABLES OF THE HOUSEHOLD.	PARABLES OF THE SEA-SHORE.
Making bread.	Dragging nets.
Using salt.	Landing fish.
Mending clothes.	Seeking pearls.
Filling bottles.	
Looking for coins.	
Lighting lamps.	
Knocking at a door.	
Going home.	

Observe that the Parables of the Gospel are often homely, but never vulgar, for common objects are never treated in a common way.

Observe, also, that they have very little in common with the 'Nature Lessons' given in schools. They move on different planes. 'Consider the lilies of the field,' on one level prepares you only for a lesson in botany; on the other it carries you to the loftiest heights of trust in the Providence of God.

There is a curious verse in the Book of Proverbs which says; 'The legs of the lame are not equal; so is a parable in the mouth of fools.' I think this must mean that to talk only about natural things, and never about the spiritual things of which they are types, is to be like a man who, with two legs, can only use one, and halts on that.

There is also a verse in St. Mark's Gospel which puts the same thought more seriously: 'Know ye not this parable? and how shall ye know all the parables?' If we take things only in a literal, matter-of-fact way, how shall we have any insight into the unseen mysteries everywhere waiting to be interpreted? And, indeed, the unseen things are the real things; when the visible things shall have passed away, they will remain and endure. The basis of life is spiritual, and the basis of teaching should be spiritual also.

E. P. BARROW.

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If the mind once becomes stagnant it can give no fresh draught to another mind; it is drinking out of a pond, instead of from a spring.—DR. ARNOLD.

## A Mission of Patience.

**W**HEN people enter the Nazareth Ward they always comment delightedly on its pretty, inviting appearance. With its blue serge bed-quilts embroidered in yellow; cosy, cushioned chairs of American wicker; its table and window-sills bright with flowers, and its shelves of well-bound books, the apartment could scarcely look anything but attractive. In addition to this, however, the walls have been decorated in a special way which make you feel the influence of beauty wherever you turn, and the story of how this came to be is, I think, so touching that it deserves to be repeated.

### I.—THE DREAMS OF YOUTH.

When I first knew Jessica Wight, she was a happy-faced, bonny girl not yet eighteen, with a marvellous capacity for enthusiasm, together with a discriminating and well-balanced mind which made her at once a charming and companionable little friend. Her father was the author of several works which are much quoted by people who profess to know anything about the scientific discoveries of their age, and he had trained his family in the ideals of simple but noble living, of which Wordsworth was the teacher and example. They lived, indeed, not far from Grasmere, in a little cottage

scarcely more convenient or luxurious than the one immortalized by the poet, under the shadow of Lough Rigg, and overlooking Rydal Water. Here, with her childish heart gradually opening to the wonder and beauty of her surroundings, Jessica was brought up, and her mind absorbed the teaching of the spirit of English Lakeland as naturally as grass absorbs the dew. She did not go about in ‘worlds unrealized,’ however, for, though imaginative, she had no tinge of mysticism in her nature, and was intensely conscious of the things which gave her either pleasurable or melancholy emotions. A strong, healthy, young creature, she raced up the northern fells and wandered through the dales of her native country in all weathers; and beauty born of light and colour, as well as of ‘murmuring sound,’ passed into her face.

She had one ambition—she wanted to be an artist. People said she was going to develop into a genius: certainly Ruskin, to whom she had once timidously sent some girlish sketches, had distinctly told her to go on in the direction she had chosen, pointing out that no sacrifice was to be grudged in the pursuit of her ideal. But except at an exhibition once held in the Institute at Coniston, to which many well-known artists had lent their pictures, she had never seen any of the noble achievements of illustrious painters; and her methods, though clever, showed how sadly she lacked training.

I was an old friend of the Wights, and generally paid them a visit once a

year, when Jessica and I took long walks together. On these occasions she would tell me of the disappointments and longings which had filled her life since we last met, and of the ideas which flitted through her busy brain. I had no children of my own, and I took a great fancy to Jessica. With such a sweet girl for a daughter, I often thought, how much less lonely my life would have been!

One day the conversation turned on self-sacrifice. We were sitting, I remember, under a shady tree beside the small but exquisite mere in front of the Wight's cottage, watching the reeds swaying rhythmically as the wind swept over them, while the water rippled throbbing among their slender stems. It was one of those radiant afternoons in mid-September, when the year seems to stand still on the verge of autumn, reluctant to break off the matchless weather, and destroy the handiwork of summer. The afternoon sunshine was steeping everything in its warm glow. Every blade of grass appeared to be silently absorbing the flood of mellow light, and had we ceased to talk, we should scarcely have ventured to take up the thread of our conversation again, I think, so perfect was the stillness all around us.

Jessica had taken off her hat, and stroked back the damp curls from her forehead. She was leaning against my shoulder, with her face turned towards the sheet of water, which bore a perfect reflection of the opposite fall in its silent depths.

'Do you know, Marquise' (the silly child had given me that name because she said I reminded her, with my white hair dressed *a la* Marie Antoinette, of a great French lady), 'Do you know, Marquise, I dare not think how it would hurt me to leave this lovely corner of the world. Other places are equally beautiful, perhaps, and equally dear to other people; but I think there is a glamour about the English Lake Country which one does not feel conscious of in any other part of England, and I cannot conceive how any one who has been brought up in Westmoreland can ever breathe out of hearing of its ghylls and becks—out of sight of its meres and mountains.'

'That is so like youth,' I said, with a smile. 'When we are young we never *can* realize how the human heart is to get along without the pleasures which have always made its happiness.' But we learn, in time.'

'Does one learn to leave the country in which one's childhood has been passed, without a pang, Marquise? Oh, I don't think I *can* believe that! Why, it would be death to me to be forced to live where I could not smell the bracken and the heather—in a town, for instance, where, if you go for a walk, you see nothing but houses, and chimneys, and people with pale cheeks.'

'And yet, dear, that is the fate of thousands whose childhood has been spent amid scenes as beautiful as this. Doubtless they are conscious of feeling caged in, very often, but custom, neces-

sity, and a sense of duty help one to bear most things with tolerable equanimity.'

'Yes,' said Jessica, with a sigh, 'I suppose so, but I am glad that I am not called upon to endure anything so terrible! You don't know what a wild creature at heart I am, Marquise. My nature is as irrepressible as one of our "forces," rushing down some rocky dale. It can't bear restraints, and would fret most violently at any barrier thrown in its way.'

I looked down at the girlish face resting against my shoulder, and wondered if life would always deal gently with this child of the mountains, whose speech was so much older than her years. Had she, really, the strength of endurance which life, with its inevitable troubles and burdens, would put to the test?

'Do you like that kind of nature, Marquise?' demanded Jessica. 'Or do you think there is something too turbulent and untamed about it?'

'I have a great deal of sympathy with it, dear, and I would not have it robbed of any of that splendid energy. But I would have the energy concentrated into one swiftly flowing current, like that of a river which sweeps through miles of town and country, serviceable to man as well as beautiful, and not less so when it laves dingy wharves than when it glides through meadows bright with buttercups.'

Jessica looked at me thoughtfully.

'You think everything in life ought to serve some purpose, don't you,

Marquise? It is not enough just to be?'

'Well, for human souls, doing, not being, is the only justification of our existence at all. And, in proportion to our capacity for imbibing happiness and knowledge—in proportion to the gifts with which we have been endowed—ought we to minister to our fellow-men.'

'I have no knowledge; but I have one small gift. How, I wonder, can I use that for the benefit of others?'

I looked round, dreamily taking in the beauty of the golden afternoon.

'Try, little Jessica, to put some of the joy of your untroubled life into your paintings.—The beauty of a Westmoreland lake under the "daffodil skies" of early morning,—the flush of heather on a lonely fell that hears the music of the pines—a sloping piece of woodland blue with harebells—these reeds and rushes through which the water sobs and lisps—that lovely bit of rosy cloud swimming in the blue sky over Silver How—oh, if only some poor, sick, lonely souls I know of could see half the exquisite sights upon which we feast our eyes here day by day, the world would be to them, no longer a "prison-house," but a Paradise indeed. Paint these things, dear, paint them with all your soul, and you will have no need to complain that your gift is useless as a means of service to man.'

'Ah,' said Jessica, with a winning smile, 'and if I could put all these things on canvas, it would be just

another form of self-gratification, for doesn't it make me happier than anything else could to try to paint the things I love?' The smile broke into a laugh, and Jessica rubbed her cheek against my shoulder.

'Dear Marquise, if by doing what I chiefly love to do all my life I'm going to be a useful influence in the world, things are going to be pretty smooth for me. The only thing I dread is the inability to paint things as I see them, and as I want others to see them. But I will try—so very hard! And you shall go to one of the big Exhibitions one day, and see a little bit of Windermere staring at you from the wall, and say: "Jessica Wight did that, in memory of the days we spent together on the most beautiful lake in England!"'

How little I dreamed, as those light words fell on my ear, under what sad circumstances I should recall them years after, and with what irrepressible tears!

After this we kept silent, until the gray twilight began to fall, and the silver sheet of Rydal Water looked so mystical and silent that, as the imaginative girl at my side remarked, one almost expected to see Sir Bedivere come trampling through the reeds, to fling Excalibur far out into the lake.

## II.—BETTER THAN DREAMS.

During the autumn which followed I went to America to visit a brother of mine who had settled in Wisconsin,

and married there some years ago. Shortly after I arrived, his wife fell ill, and we lost her after a few weeks of intense anxiety. My brother, who had just returned from a prolonged lecturing tour in the Southern States, was at the time suffering from the nervous strain which is the penalty men have to pay for over-working their brains, and this grief told on him terribly. It was clearly my duty to remain where I was, and look after him and his four motherless boys. I, therefore, made arrangements to do so, and four years elapsed before I saw the coast of England again.

In the meantime, sad news of the Wights reached me from various sources. I heard that Jessica's father had died suddenly, less than twelve months after our memorable conversation by Rydal Water, leaving his wife and children but scantily provided with the means of living; and that they had moved to London, where the boys had succeeded in obtaining situations, while my little friend gave lessons. Jessica's letters—dated from a shabby street in Notting Hill, where her beauty-loving nature must have pined like an imprisoned lark for the freedom and loveliness of the Westmoreland valleys—were bravely and brightly written, and my heart went out to the poor child as I thought of the spirit of real self-sacrifice and heroism underlying those cheery words. 'Mother is very well,' she wrote on one occasion, 'and rather enjoys the bustle of the neighbourhood we are

living in. Mother always *did* like to be in the "busy hive of men," and I don't think she ever found "the cheerful silence of the fells" a sufficient compensation for the racket of a town, which she had been used to in her girlhood. I am so glad for her sake that we are here. Dear Marquise, your beloved London seems less like a monster and more like a great enchantress to me every day; and did you ever walk in Kensington Gardens in the lovely summer weather, and watch the little ducks on the Serpentine, or sit under a great, glorious elm, just doing nothing at all, but luxuriating in the *feel* of the grass-scented air? When I was younger, I thought beauty did not exist out of Westmoreland; now I see that it overflows everywhere. If I don't love it quite as much here, it is because I lived in Grasmere Vale so long, and can't all at once transfer my love to new scenes. Still, I have delightful times in Kensington Gardens.

For three years we corresponded with great regularity, and as time went on I became convinced that the Wights found it a difficult matter to make both ends meet. Jessica herself, it seemed, was not so strong as had always been supposed; and the ceaseless repression of her inmost nature which the life she was now leading necessitated, was not beneficial to her nerves. After a long day's teaching, she would sit down to her painting, or go off to an art class with aching head and tired eyes, her ambition to do something

with the gift God had given her making her oblivious to physical fatigue. She frequently received commissions for pictures from people who had known her father, which was a great help financially; but they were, of necessity, executed with haste, while her soul cried out for time to devote to more ambitious and enduring work. I gathered this from the letters which, as time went on, Jessica permitted to reveal more and more of her true self.

During my fourth year in America, when I was happily making arrangements to return to England for a few months' visit in the following spring, these letters became much less frequent than usual, were more hastily and carelessly written, and at last ceased altogether. I did not worry about this at first, as I knew that Jessica led a very busy life, and did not wish to make unreasonable demands on her time; but at last, growing really anxious, I wrote and begged for a few lines to assure me that everything was right with my old friends. I received the heartrending news from Mrs. Wight that Jessica had fallen a victim to an insidious kind of paralysis which threatened to make her entirely helpless, and that she had been taken to a private home for such cases where she would be better nursed and cared for than in the meagre little house at Notting Hill.

"My brave girl never murmurs," wrote the poor mother, "but bears everything with fortitude—even cheerfulness. The doctors say the collapse was imminent from the first—that the

strain of the past few years has been too great for her strength, which was never equal to the demands made on it by her naturally energetic temperament. What I rebel against is the irrevocableness of it all, which permits one to entertain no hope of an ultimate recovery. When I think that I shall never see my child except as an incurable invalid, I scarcely know how to prevent myself from falling into abject despair.'

Nothing, I think, in all my life, had hurt me quite as much as this sudden blow. At first I simply could not believe it. Jessica, who used to be able to walk ten unequal Westmoreland miles without feeling tired—climb the breast of some steep fell almost without quickened breathing—and, after a long day spent chiefly in the open air, go to bed for a few hours' sleep, and rise at five o'clock the next morning—she, a helpless paralytic, chained to her bed day after day, and unable to walk half a yard—. . . . It seemed monstrous, impossible! And yet there was no gainsaying the truth, as I learnt when, immediately I arrived in London, I went to see my little friend.

She was dressed, but lying on her bed in a loose gown, her fair head, crowned with a little muslin cap which gave her a sweet, quaint air, resting against a big red cushion. She looked frail, and her lips trembled as I bent over and drew her into my arms without speaking; but her eyes met mine so bravely and smilingly that any words of sympathy would have been out of

place, and I could only look at her in silence, smiling in my turn through irrepressible tears.

'It is good to see you again, Marquise!' she said brightly. 'I have longed to see you! Yes, I know you think it strange to see me here, but I'm getting quite used to it now, and everybody is so kind. Don't you think this is a pretty ward, too? In the next one there are several children, and sometimes we invite one or two who are able to come, to tea. One is a dear baby of two, who has something the matter with her throat, and can't speak; but she is always laughing, and her funny little gestures amuse us immensely. There's a girl in the Good Shepherd Ward who is a friend of mine, too. She is dreadfully paralysed —far more than I am—and has to be carried down in a chair. I used to be in that ward at first, and one day when some flowers were sent to me from Westmoreland, I gave her a bunch to put in her dress, and then I discovered that she, too, knew the Lake Country. That was a link between us at once.'

I spent a long afternoon with Jessica that day, for we had much to talk about; and it seemed to do her so much good to see an old friend. When I left the Home, promising myself to go twice a week at least while I remained in England, I felt happier than I had ever been in my life before. For there is something in the spectacle of a courageous soul, clearly shining in spite of circumstances calculated to dim

the glow of the most perfect faith, like a lamp set in a dark place, which cannot fail to inspire and cheer those who come within its influence. And my heart was less moved with pity for the young girl stricken down in the very springtime of life, than full of thankfulness to Him who had given her a strong, unselfish spirit, and made it possible for her to be a power for good even within the four walls of a Home for Invalids.

Jessica had her good and bad days : the latter she spent in quiet rest, the former in working, reading, and in painting. Yes, in painting, for her art was as much to her as ever : and now I am going to tell you how she used her gift to give enduring pleasure to many who succeeded her in that place of suffering human beings.

The walls of the Nazareth Ward were lined up to a height of about five feet with boarding which had been stained dark brown, and Jessica conceived the idea of painting a little scene in every division formed by the ten-inch wide planks. The Sister gave permission for this to be done, and a happy period began for my little friend. Every day, when she was well enough, she might be seen seated in her wheel chair, palette in hand, creating pictures suggested by memory or invention on the dull background of the boarding, watched with interest by those patients who, like herself, were well enough to leave their beds. Now it was a mountain peak, girdled with snowy cloud ; now a bit of meadow-

land with a stream running through it ; now a solitary fir tree with the sunlight glowing on its brown trunk ; now the golden head and innocent eyes of a little child ; now the wrinkled, homely face of an old dalesman, or a white-sailed yacht cutting through the blue waters of her favourite lake. The variety and beauty of these little pictures filled everyone with astonishment, and as she proceeded round the room, leaving the wall behind her glowing with colour, the enthusiasm of the ward became so great that it spread through the Home, and the sisters and convalescents from other parts of the building used to come and view her work. She herself was eager to make each scene more beautiful than the last, and to complete the whole series as quickly as possible lest she should suddenly grow worse, and be unable to do any more. One day she said to me :—

‘ You remember Whittier’s verse :

“ He who blesses most is blest,  
And God and man shall own his worth,  
Who toils to leave as his bequest  
An added beauty to the earth.”

I have that always in my mind, and since I can’t follow the old track of ambition which I once started on, I must be content to do what I can within these four walls.’ She was arranging some spring flowers which I had brought as she spoke, and suddenly her eyes filled with tears.

‘ Sometimes,’ she said, gently touching some sweet mauve crocuses with a shaking hand, ‘ I have such a longing to

go into the woods and lanes again, and see things really growing. But,' added the brave little sufferer, 'how glorious it is to think that once I *was* able to do so! No one can ever take the joy of those old days from me, and I only wish that I could distribute some of the happiness which I receive from memory to those who are much more afflicted than myself.'

She glanced towards the panel she had just completed, whereon a spray of almond-blossom on a blue background—just as you see it on a clear day in March against the sky—was delicately painted. I saw the trouble in her eyes again, and put my arm round her shoulders.

'My poor child, it is hard to bear, I know; but you, too, are leaving "an added beauty to the earth," and your cheerfulness and patience are a lesson to all who know you.'

'You always say kind things,' she replied, half in a whisper; 'but I want to tell you what nobody else seems to have guessed, not even the doctor,—I am gradually becoming completely paralyzed. Don't look like that, dear—I have known it for a long time. My hands get so stiff very often that I can scarcely hold a brush, and I have a curious numb sensation in all my limbs. It frightens me when I think what absolute helplessness would mean, but I try not to dwell on it. What worries me, is the thought that I may not be able to finish these little pictures before—before my strength goes altogether.'

'Oh, but you will, Jessica,' I answered, trying to speak in a cheerful voice. 'And, perhaps, things will not turn out so badly as you think. These sensations of numbness may be the result of fatigue. Rest more, and don't exert yourself too much.'

That the girl had spoken truly I soon discovered, for as the weeks went on, her work tired her more and more, and she was obliged to make her painting hours shorter. It was clear that total paralysis was imminent, and in spite of all the doctors could do, a life of utter helplessness stretched before her. As slowly, yet as surely, as the tide creeps up the rocks on a calm day, when the ocean scarcely seems to ripple under the quiet heavens, this terrible numbness spread through her frail body, until at last all power of use left it, and the little active figure which had once been such a familiar sight on the Westmoreland fells lay inert and helpless on her white bed, only the clear light of the eyes bearing witness that a soul inhabited it. With those eyes alone, as time went on, could Jessica speak to those whose hearts were wrung by her sufferings, for even the sweet, smiling mouth became dumb at last, and to us it seemed that death would be far preferable to this ghastly mockery of living. But Jessica never seemed to think so. Day by day she lay there more helpless than a baby, able, it is true, to hear all that was said, and to see all that went on when we raised her on her pillow, but powerless to lift a finger or articulate a word.

And day by day her eyes met ours with a look of indomitable courage and beautiful patience which put to shame every pessimistic or rebellious spirit. It was impossible to come within the sphere of those eyes and grumble about the difficulties of life! People have told me that after visiting that ward, and witnessing this most touching spectacle of human suffering, they have gone out into the world again, feeling indescribably happy, and fortified for the prosaic 'daily round.'

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Jessica lived for three years, and then death mercifully released her. Tears of gladness I wept beside the open grave as the body was laid in the earth, for I knew that somewhere, beyond mortal sight, that beautiful, heroic soul was rejoicing in its freedom from the cruel fetters of a tortured existence, unfolding—as a lily unfolds to the sunlight—in the light of God's presence. And to-day the gentle Sister of Nazareth Ward, in her black robes and snowy, winged cap, draws your attention with a gesture of pride to the glowing pictures on the wooden boards.

'Are they not beautiful?' she says. 'They were done by a very gifted girl, who was a patient here, before she became helpless through paralysis. She would have been famous as an artist, people say, if she had not been so suddenly afflicted; but ambition ceased to trouble her after she came here to us, and her one idea was to make our pretty ward a little more beautiful, that it might seem

less like a prison to every one who succeeded her. I think she gained her desire. She worked as long as she could do anything at these little scenes, and then calmly awaited her fate as if she felt that her task was done. We all loved her, for she was truly a saint, and her name will always be a tradition in Nazareth Ward.'

LAURA G. ACKROYD.

#### ART AND IMITATION.

In order to help children to perceive the difference between a work of *art* and a mere *imitation*, Mr. W. B. Rands tells the story of a sailor out on the coast of China, who sent his patched trousers to a Chinese tailor as a pattern for a new pair. The tailor copied the pattern so faithfully that the new pair were patched and darned exactly like the old ones! That was imitation. But the artist, he tells us, even in dealing with things that are ugly does not treat them as if they were *intended* to be ugly, but somehow puts this and that together and shows us beauty where we did not see it before. Art, he says, is 'make-believe,' but it is 'make-believe' done with love in it, and an eye for the lovely and good. 'The man who is what we call an artist does not, in making what we call works of art, seek what we call pleasure. His work is often painful to him, and yet he goes on with it, and his one wish is to make it perfect.' And the special virtue of true art is that whether the artist is a painter or a sculptor, a musician, or a poet, or a story-teller, he puts a thought into such a shape that all people, no matter where or when they live, are moved by its beauty and affected by its mirth or its sadness, and are helped to feel real things better by the help of the artist's 'make-believe.' So the artist is a teacher, a friend who opens the eyes of our mind, and leads us into the world of loveliness and perfection.

## Class, Guild, and Church.

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**T**HE idea of uniting all the branches of religious culture connected with any one congregation is certainly not a new one; and yet the 'Guild' movement, which embodies this idea, and which has lately developed with remarkable vigour, is probably a novelty to many. Others, perhaps, to whom it is not a novelty, have not hitherto seen their way to approve the special forms under which it has been brought before them. All, however, will recognize the importance of its aim. If the chasms in our Free Church system could be effectively bridged over, and from the youngest to the oldest there might prevail one spirit of devout aspiration, constancy in habits of worship, and fidelity in good works, we should have cause to be grateful.

By giving a large section of our volume this year to this subject, we hope to secure for it a good deal of practical consideration, both by parents and by ministers, teachers, and leaders of congregations generally. The Rev. Joseph Wood's forcible plea (p. 128) needs no reinforcement here. It submits to us, not the scheme of a theorist, but one based on long experience. But since the mind is generally more influenced by illustrations than by arguments, we have prevailed on the Rev.

E. D. Priestley Evans to let us publish at full length some papers of his which represent the actual working life of a Guild of long standing and great effectiveness. Doubtless his pages will be read with discrimination; but it must be remembered that they are, so to speak, hewn for us out of the 'living rock'; they are not dressed up with the view to please a critical public, but tell us authentically what a typical Guild's life is like.

In using the term 'typical,' however, it is necessary to guard against a possible misconception. Nothing would be more misleading, nothing so likely to prove fatal to the 'Guild' movement, than the notion that any one type must necessarily prevail. The 'Guilds' Union' no more seeks to dictate methods and to prescribe formulæries than the Sunday School Association does. The latter considers especially the needs of the pupils in our schools, it seeks to keep people in mind of their duty towards them, and it offers copious materials and manifold suggestions for the aid of willing workers. But to each school is left the choice of its own line of action. Similarly, the aim of linking on these earlier stages of religious culture with those of full church membership is consistent with a variety of methods;

and, in a community that has always jealously guarded 'the liberty of prophesying,' the liberty of action is sure to find champions. So be it! The brief and all-too-modest contribution of the Rev. W. J. B. Tranter may be taken as an illustration of another type of working towards the same great aim. Had space permitted we could have easily given examples of other kinds of classes and guilds already at work, but this may perhaps be better done after further and wider experience of their methods.

Whatever plans be adopted, the ideal surely is a noble one, viz., to develop amongst us a system of co-operation between the life of the Home, the School, the Class, Young People's Union, and the Church,—to do this with real effectiveness, and yet avoid the perils of a rigid ecclesiasticism, of spiritual lordship over the young and weak, and of creating an atmosphere of artificial pieties. It is an ideal the very enunciation of which summons us every one to earnest and prayerful thought, and to unwearying diligence. Let us dare the dangers of being busy; they are at least nobler than those of being idle. Dr. Maclaren, quoting Christ's saying, 'Bring forth fruit with perseverance,' adds very wisely—'Depend upon it that effort is the condition of fruitfulness in Christian life; howsoever it be true that the folded leaf "grows green and broad and takes no care," it is not true about Christian growth.'

EDITOR.

### THE GUILD AT WORK.

#### A GLIMPSE OF OUR PLANS AND PRINCIPLES.

**N**O two churches and their organizations are alike. Hence it is uncertain whether the description of work in one locality may be of any real help to those in other localities. But as you, Mr. Editor, are desirous of having something of this nature from me, I must try and meet your wishes; but I fear it must be in the most meagre and scrappy manner, for the record of our work can be read in full only in bulky volumes of our Monthly Calendar or 'Record.' As a minister's sermons vary (or should vary) with the church with which he is connected, so does his other work for the church.

(1) In my present church we are dependent upon numbers, and we consequently *lay stress upon numbers*. Our church could not well go on without them. Our wardens, therefore, are watchful, and never lose a chance of approaching young men or women and inviting them to subscribe to the maintenance of the church. The majority of our subscribers are young people, who take a living interest in the church and its welfare. The minister has also made known his wishes, and has adopted the motto of an old West of England minister, namely, that when the young people get married they should '*marry the church full* and not marry it empty.' As far as possible they do their best to fulfil these wishes.

(2) We also *lay stress upon the im-*

portance of *attendance at all services*. Congregations soon take their cue from their ministers on this matter. In the past we have been fond of telling our people that God can be worshipped anywhere, which is quite true. But as a rule they do not trouble to worship him *anywhere*. The people have taken our words to mean that they can stay away from the services, that attendance does not really matter; but we have lived long enough to see that as a rule if God is not worshipped at church he is worshipped nowhere, and that 'Rural Religion' and 'Pedestrian Piety' are neither religion nor piety.

(3) *Organizations*. We believe in organizations, and that very little is usually done without them. 'Organize the soul,' as Dr. Crothers said at the New Century Meetings.

Without a complete system of organization much energy runs to waste, or stagnates and gets stale. Nothing is done for the lack of channels for the energy to run along. Many men would do a great deal more than they do, even at the present time, if the year were mapped out, if it were filled with a succession of periods taken up with special work.

In addition to mapping out the year, the institutions should be graded, so that the young people should take it as a matter of course that at a certain time they expect and are expected to join them. This makes it less easy for them to slip away when the fever for freedom comes upon them at the difficult age of sixteen or thereabouts.

The following list serves to show how all our engagements are worked in together. First as to our more secular work. About Christmas time we have a Robin Breakfast in the Town Hall, organized by the Guild on Christmas Day for many hundreds of poor children. Then there are the parties for our Sunday school children, for the Mothers' Meeting, the Adult Class, and a New Year's party for the congregation; and one for the Provident Society (a society whose purpose is similar to that of Odd-fellows' clubs, etc.). About February the grand Festival of the Temperance Society is held in the Town Hall for two nights. Much time is spent for months in preparing for this, for the children generally give an operatic performance of some kind. Soon after this our annual 'Concert and Dance' is held in the Town Hall. The Social Committee organize this, together with the 'Garden Fete' in the summer, which are two of the most important functions in connection with the congregation. Summer brings a long series of class outings into the country, generally every Saturday, when each class has an enjoyable half-day with its teacher, and often the minister as well, in the fresh air. Then there is the Sunday School Treat and the Mothers' Trip. The Temperance Society (in addition to a Social Evening in April, when prizes are distributed for good conduct, regular attendance, or some useful service), has also a summer outing. The teachers of the Sunday school have a quarterly tea in connection with their

business meeting, and, in the hot weather, go into the country for one of their meetings. In addition to the above there are the three engagements connected with the Stourbridge and District Sunday School Union (consisting of Stourbridge, Cradley, Lye, and Kidderminster schools), namely, the Social Evening for Teachers and Elder Scholars in February or March ; the Festival for all the scholars, consisting of a service, a tea, and games or a ramble afterwards, and generally held on Whit-Monday ; and lastly a Picnic for Teachers and Elder Scholars in the country. These functions are held at the different churches in rotation.

In the six winter months the Girls' Club holds its meetings three nights a week ; this has been transformed of late years into Evening Continuation Classes, which have proved most excellent in results. For the young men there is a gymnasium, which is conducted two nights a week, and it is hoped that next winter a Young Men's Club will be formed. In the summer they spend most evenings in the cricket field. Two classes are held in the winter for the special purpose of preparing young men and women for becoming teachers in the Sunday school, namely, an Elocution Class one evening a week to give them more confidence in themselves ; and a Bible Class on Sunday mornings before service. These have proved useful in every way.

We have fifteen special services during the year, four of which are closely connected with our young

people, namely, The Guild Rededication Service on Maundy Thursday, Guild Festival in November, Confirmation Service on Easter Sunday, the Union Festival already mentioned above, besides, of course, the Sunday School and Day School Sermons, and the Scholars' Quarterly Services. For eight or nine weeks before Easter a Confirmation Class is held in the vestry once a week, but last year it was held twice a week as all the members could not come on the same night, engagements being somewhat numerous and clashed with each other. Marriott's little book on Unitarianism is usually taken. The six chapters are read and discussed in six evenings ; and the remaining weeks are taken up with the discussion of disputed texts, with a final word upon the necessity, after all, of adorning our doctrine with a beautiful life. This brings us up to Easter Day, the day specially set apart of old in the early Christian Church for receiving new members into the church. The third of the ten services is taken, after which come anthem and collection together ; then the address is given, followed by the act of reception, and this in turn followed by a prayer, hymn, and benediction. Instead of first chant the Psalm for Easter Day is sung. During the act of reception all the congregation stand up as a sign of their welcome to the young people. The name of each one is written on a Confirmation card, which is presented to the new member on coming forward in response to the

calling out of the name. The minister, taking each by the right hand, says, ‘A. B.—I welcome you into the fellowship of this church, which is devoted to the worship of God and the service of man ; and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God dwell in you richly, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness.’ At the close of the service the Communion Service is held, to which all the congregation are invited, and which all the new members attend. At the Confirmation Service the young people are strongly urged to join the Guild immediately, and attend the Sunday services and monthly Communion services as regularly as they can. No new member has a vote in the business affairs of the congregation until he becomes a subscriber ; but they are all made to feel in this service that this church is their religious home. Before the preparation classes begin, the Sunday school teachers are asked to select candidates of the age of sixteen years, and to accompany them to the classes by way of encouragement.

We now hear the cry of leakage everywhere, in every denomination. The greatest leakage, I venture to think, takes place in the upper classes of the schools, and the difficulty is how to retain the young people. In spite of the best and completest organizations there is sure to be a certain amount of it. But in the case of the young people I believe that the Confirmation Service, followed by membership of the Guild, is one of the most effective

instruments in remedying the evil. I happen to know for a fact that the open declaration of joining the church has prevented some of our young people going elsewhere when strong outside attractions have been tending to pull them away. Had it not been for this service they would have gone.

Then again, by joining the Guild, the Confirmation Service is not allowed to ‘fizzle out,’ so to speak, but the interest and enthusiasm are kept alive. They are, mostly, proud to join the Guild, as it has made a name for itself for public philanthropic work in the town. It is an honour to belong to it. So the schools feed the Confirmation classes ; these in turn feed the Guild ; and the Guild feeds the Church. The only point on which there lies some doubt is with regard to the age. I am inclined to think with Thring, the great schoolmaster, that sixteen is too late in many cases, and that fourteen years would produce better results in every way. The impression made on the mind at fourteen would be perhaps even stronger than that made at sixteen, and would serve more effectively as a check when a more critical or headstrong time arrives. At sixteen they can look back to the solemn time, and the memory of it is both a restraint and an inspiration to carry them over into calmer waters. As Dr. Martineau says, ‘The transition of one of these periods to the other is perhaps the greatest spiritual crisis of human life, the turn of the tide . . . with or without the compass for dark nights,

and the eye skilled to steer by the eternal stars. We would mark with devout recognition this era of experience; give voice, method, and direction to its tumultuous emotions; bring its burning aspirations to merge in the cool ascending breath of prayer; *distinctly present the young disciple*, fast becoming one with us, before the Master at whose feet he is to sit, and the God whose still, small voice he is to hear.'

The work before us is not so much to attract outsiders into our churches, although that is pleasant and encouraging when it can be done, but it is to prevent the insiders from being attracted out. Our churches would be full if we could but do the latter alone. There is a natural membership to every church; but the church does not always make the most of it, claim it and utilize it. It is hoped that the above partially shows how it may be done. Let the young people bring themselves, as their best gift, and seal their allegiance by the definite act of uniting with the church. Without this young life things often grow stale, if not depressing, even to the most faithful members who have given long years of service to the church and its institutions. The members naturally decrease, and everything looks at a standstill for a time, and the outlook is one of death. Numbers are important, we must all confess, if a cause is to survive, much more important if it is to succeed. It is so in politics, and every other cause, and it is no use our trying to comfort ourselves

with a proud superiority, and thanking God that we are not as other people are. In our heart of hearts we long for numbers, and are honestly glad when we can get them; nay, it is a righteous thing to desire them, if we love our cause in truth. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to draft the young life in, and our meetings begin at once to lose their staleness. They bring freshness with them, and impart freshness to the old members. The outlook is changed. The older members lose their anxiety, and are filled with a joyful energy. And parents are only too glad and grateful when such interest is taken in their children. They are proud to know that you are concerned about them. Our love of 'freedom,' which has not been true freedom at all (for I like the real thing as much as anybody), has hitherto allowed us to neglect them utterly, allowed them to grow up shapeless and lost as far as we were concerned. But when they feel a real interest is taken in them they will not desert us or drift away from us. There are few more faithful and loyal than they are. Their ideals are generally very high, higher perhaps than at any other time, and they are devoted to the embodiments of those ideals. And this brings me to my last heading.

(4) *Definiteness.* When anyone joins a club, he knows that the club has some object or purpose in its existence. The club or association is not afraid of declaring its object, and the member knows what he is doing by joining it.

So a church should exist for something, and if it does it should not be afraid of declaring it to the world. Hitherto, we have been afraid of declaring anything. The Church with us has not even necessarily stood for the good life, or for any Ideals or Principles, because they have never been declared. I, therefore, hold that there is something more important than our constant 'search for truth.' It may be very necessary to keep an open mind with regard to certain things. But there are also such things as *Eternal Verities*, and the emphasis should be laid on them rather than on the constant craving for something new,—the restlessness that so often ruins all strong life. A church should not be an operating-room or laboratory. It must be a home, providing food and shelter. Fox-hunting and bird-nesting may be very pleasant diversions; but they are only diversions, and not the regular work of life. We cannot live on them. A home does not subsist on the mere *search* for food. It must *find* food regularly, and *use* it. All truths, however, are not foods, and many of them when discovered are unuseable. Some are not worth the trouble of searching out; others it would be positively wicked to search for. *We do not accept every truth* from any and every corner of God's universe. New science has demolished old science, and will go on doing so perhaps, bringing to light a more perfect knowledge of the outward world. But the inward world of the spirit is ever the same. Science does

not demolish that,—and never will. Any new truths from the outside, will not affect it very much. Our instincts remain the same, and the ideals that spring from them remain the same,—the great spiritual truths, the *Eternal Verities*; but the outward search for truth is to a great extent speculative sport.

We are alive, therefore, to the moral dangers that lie beneath the attractive garbs of 'Liberty' and 'Progress.' We cannot build a house on sand that is constantly shifting. In other words, the spirit of uncertainty must not be the atmosphere for us to live in. A church must be always weak that has no great convictions, and is afraid of declaring them. Without great inspiring Ideals, it will *do* nothing great, but rot and cumber the ground. 'Read not the [shifting] Times,' said Thoreau; 'Read the *Eternities*.' 'Steer by the *eternal stars*', said Martineau. And the eternal stars are the knowledge of God; not a God who is the result of philosophic speculation. Philosophy is a useful cure for doubt; but we mistake men and women, if we think that doubt is the prevailing atmosphere of their lives, and that what they need is philosophy. We must not preach philosophy: we must preach the Gospel, the glad tidings of God's character. Our people have perished through lack of digestible food. They have craved for the true *knowledge* of God, the bread from heaven, and we have given them a stone instead. And, as in the days of

Hosea, it might be said of them, ‘ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. . . I take pleasure in loving-kindness and in the knowledge of God. . . Seek to know God, till the fruit of righteousness come to you.’

We exist, therefore, to promote the knowledge of God, in order that men and women may glorify Him in their lives, and become like unto Him as Jesus commanded his disciples to become. We lay the emphasis not on the transient but on the permanent, not the shifting progressive but the abiding Eternal, knowing that the Eternal is the same in the beginning, now, and evermore, and that all real progress is not mere movement and restlessness ; but movement towards a goal, not *eternal* movement, but movement towards the Eternal. For this reason, we sing a Covenant in our Guild, and we call our Church by the all-comprehensive term, Unitarian. And though the Trust Deed is a so-called ‘open’ one, we should think it as absurd not to define our present position as it would be for a grocer to refuse to call his shop a grocer’s shop because the deeds of the house do not define it or its usage. We should think a chemist not only absurd but unfair, if he did not give some indication to the purchasing public as to the character of his business, and if he said to our remonstrance, ‘ My business is not that of a chemist, I dare not call it so ; the deed is a perfectly open one, and does not define the business that shall be carried on here.’ We

believe that much harm has been done through wrong emphasis, which has made us forget that there are even greater things than ‘ liberty ’ and ‘ progress,’—that there are such things as the great spiritual Truths which abide for ever.

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#### CONFIRMATION ADDRESS FOR EASTER DAY.

THIS is our happy Easter morn, on which we commemorate a revival, the awakening from death to life which the early disciples believed concerning their Master. It is pleasant to rise from the mist into the sunshine and the pure blue sky. During the past week our minds have been occupied with sorrowful remembrances : we have been living in the gloom and darkness of sad thoughts, of depressing memories. But to-day we rise into the sunshine of happy thoughts, of bright memories, calling to mind the way in which those of long ago found fresh hope, a new joy, and were inspired with life and zeal and earnestness, with a willingness to do and die for the cause of goodness, of God and his Christ. The disciples also rose upon this day from the death of despair, from the paralysis of disappointment ; they revived from the shock of consternation, and they awakened into a new life and fresh energy. It was the passing from darkness into light, from gloom into sunshine.

And it was on this day, as a consequence, in the early Christian Church, that new members were baptized, and received and recognized as belonging to the religious brotherhood. In their baptism they were giving up their old pagan life, they died to the old sinful life, and in rising out of the water, they rose up into the new life. That was one of the meanings of Baptism. It was burying the past, and living according to the new light they had obtained in Christianity.

But it was something more than this. It was the last act in a long preparation. Baptism was preceded by teaching, during which period of teaching the candidate had time to learn the nature of the new religion, and also to see whether he was growing strong enough to endure all the hardships that were certain to follow for its sake. The period of preparation gave him time to feel whether he could endure, perhaps, the loss of all his earthly possessions, endure persecution, imprisonment in dungeons, endure tortures that cannot be described, the prospect of being thrown to the lions and other wild beasts, to be torn to pieces by them, and a hundred other forms of agonizing death. If he could stand the period of preparation, and showed signs of a better mode of life, then he was allowed to be baptized. He was received and recognized as a member of the brotherhood. He declared himself openly to the world by his public baptism that he had thrown in his lot with the small and persecuted

sect called Christians, and that he was prepared to stand the consequences, only to stand true to his public vow.

My young friends, you are not called to undergo such an ordeal as that today; you are not called upon to face such an uncertain and gloomy prospect. But although severe persecutions and tortures are over, although we are not liable to attacks from pagan foes now, still our lives are liable to other attacks, to weaknesses, failings, faults. We are face to face with temptations and difficulties, with sorrows and trials; and it is necessary to train ourselves for them, to develop the muscles of the spirit, so that we can meet them in a brave and victorious manner. Of ourselves we are not sufficient. We all need the help, all the help that others can give us, and especially the help that God renders to all who look to Him and ask Him. We have a vast army to contend with, and we cannot repel its attack by separate individual effort. If it is to be routed, we must combine. We must stand by each other, support and strengthen one another, encourage and inspire one another.

And that is one meaning of Confirmation. It is to make you stronger for life's work and duties. It is to strengthen, to make you more *firm* in your high resolve, your noble endeavour. We are interested in your welfare. We wish to do all we can for you. We gather round you affectionately to help and to strengthen you, to support and uphold you, and

enable you to grow into good men and women, worthy children of your Father in Heaven. That is one meaning of Confirmation. In your infancy, I presume that most, if not all, of you were dedicated to God by those who best loved you. They brought you to be christened, thereby making a silent vow and publicly expressing the wish to bring you up in the knowledge of God and in the Christian Religion. They wished and hoped that you would grow up as worthy disciples of Jesus, renouncing the fellowship of evil and becoming the companions of goodness. You are here to-day approving of their action, giving sanction to their conduct, ratifying their best hopes and wishes, and taking upon yourselves the vow they made for you when you were too young to understand. Now you are old enough, you bring gladness to their hearts when you confirm their prayers, and when they see that you are brave enough to take your stand on the side of God and goodness.

That is the second meaning of our service here to-day. It is well to pay your vows in the presence of the people, for the day of public profession will stand out as a sacred memory to you when you are in the midst of happiness or sorrow, in sunshine or shadow. It will be a help to you to endure your trials with patience and self-restraint, to withstand the insidiousness of temptation, to repel and to conquer. It will be a beacon light showing the right way, reminding you of it, and restraining your wander-

ing footsteps, leading you back to the green pastures of life, back to the glory of God. The thought of your Church, and your fellowship therein, of your connection with its various institutions, will come up before your mind at various times, and will be one of your happiest memories, one of the richest treasures of your heart. Professing by open avowal is always a powerful help in practising. The mind is more firmly fixed in the right direction.

We have had our preparation classes in which we have discussed some of the doctrines that we hold dear. But, my young friends, as mere doctrines, as mere theological speculations, they are not enough. No doctrines are, as such. But we must adorn our doctrines with a beautiful life, a Christ-like life, with the Divine life. In welcoming you into the fellowship of this Church, therefore, I would pray you to let its interests be yours. Honour it by your daily life and work. Draw your life and strength from your knowledge of God so that you may live a pure, brave, loving life. Strive earnestly and diligently to do your work, whatever it is, faithfully and well. Read and meditate upon the words and deeds of the great and the good, and especially the life and teaching of Jesus, and learn to live and work for the good of others. I would beseech you also to make use of all the helps and opportunities afforded by the Church and its institutions to enable you to maintain your brave

resolutions and your noble purposes. For, as our venerable Dr. Drummond has said, ‘Spiritual gifts are not fixed quantities, given once for all, but influences which, with most of us, come and go, and for which we may pray daily.’ I pray you, therefore, to use all the helps at your disposal for maintaining and preserving your spiritual life; and amongst these I mention three. Make use, I pray you, of the *regular Sunday services*. Be as regular as you can in your attendance upon them, and you will find yourselves more refreshed in mind and body than by spending it as a day of pleasure.

I also hope to see every one of you becoming members of *our Guild*; and I sincerely hope that you will not let this solemn occasion pass away and run to waste, so to speak, but that you will take occasion of renewing your vows and strengthening your life by regular attendance at *our monthly communion service*. May this day prove a true Easter day to you, a day in which you feel that you are entering upon a life, a new life, of peace and true blessedness, in which you enjoy the light of heaven. And in extending to you the right hand of fellowship, we pray that here you may feel that true helpfulness surrounds you, that here you feel you receive rest from the strife, relief from weariness, encouragement, strength, and joy. In order, therefore, that the welcome to you this morning may be not mine alone, I will ask the congregation to rise and remain standing as a sign of their welcome to you—

a sign that they are ready to gather round you, help, encourage, strengthen, confirm you. I will ask you to come forward in groups as I call out your names, and I invite every member or friend who is desirous of joining in the communion service to remain with us.

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#### ADDRESS TO THE ADULT CLASS

##### FOR THE NEW YEAR.

‘Friend, Go up higher.’

I HAVE been invited by your very worthy Leader, to speak to you a few words of well-wishing at the commencement of this New Year. It is with great pleasure I comply with his request.

Let me, then, first of all, express my sincere hope that this New Year will be a happier and more prosperous one than the recent years that have gone, in a material sense, from the point of view of pounds, shillings, and pence. So long as we have bodies, we shall want food, clothing, and shelter, and if these are lacking, the mind is apt to get worried and disturbed in its meditations, and we find it difficult to concentrate our attention upon higher things. There must be competency and comfort in the lower regions of life, before it is possible to make much progress in the higher life of mind and heart. For you know well, that it is only when a nation has amplitude of material comforts, enough and to spare,

and when these can be produced in sufficient quantities by really a comparatively few out of the whole, that the rest are relieved of the important business of planting and sowing and reaping, and are able to devote themselves to other pursuits,—to school work, to study, to discovery, to invention, to literary and scientific work, to improvement and progress in every shape and form. Civilization begins to move onward and upward, as soon as the nations are relieved of worry and anxiety about material things. When no longer bothered about these things, they are free to devote their time, their powers, their energies to things that pertain to mind, to heart, to soul. I hope, therefore, you will likewise be relieved, not from work, but from worry and anxiety about the good things of the earth.

And when you are so relieved, then I hope that civilization, in its best form, will move onward and upward in your own souls, in your inner life. When you are relieved from material anxiety, then be sure that you make it a point to advance and progress, to improve your higher life of mind and heart in every possible way that lies open to you. Be sure that you are keeping pace with your material welfare, in your spiritual life. If any of you ever will be fortunate enough in time to be completely free from the necessity of working for bread; if any of you will be in the happy position of a retired gentleman—a contingency which is by no means impossible, if we

are to judge of almost all the wealthy men in our denomination—then my sincerest hopes are that you will have grown with equal pace on the mental, moral, and spiritual sides of your natures; so as first to take the position you should take in your town or any other community, and that you may take the full advantage of your position; that you will have grown in culture and true gentleness, in knowledge and politeness, in the Christian qualities of charity, and the spirit of doing good; that you will have grown in true nobility of character: so that you may be noblemen in truth. For it has been said of us Unitarians that we are a money-making and a money-saving people. And there is no dishonour in this, if it is done honestly, uprightly, righteously. Nearly all our wealthy men have been self-made men. They have not been born with a silver spoon in their mouths. And it is also said that we have fewer paupers in the workhouses up and down the country than we have members of Parliament.

But howsoever far this may be true, it is also true that the great majority of our self-made men, indeed, all of us, have been sticklers for education. They have applied themselves to learning at the same time as they have been making their money. There has always been the desire to learn, and there has been an equal readiness on the part of those who were able to teach—always a readiness to hold classes for improvement, especially notable in this church from the days of old Nicholas Pearsall,

the founder of this dear home of ours, through all the Talbot family, down to our own time in the persons of our good and zealous workers, the two Miss Badlands, and many others. Let us keep up this old tradition of our church and denomination. There is a goodly feast awaiting all who will simply enter and partake; and I am here to tell you of it, as I know partly what it is like, and I, therefore, feel it my pleasurable duty to tell you, nay, to urge you, as the master of the wedding feast in the old Bible parable said to those who were taking too inferior a position—I come to urge you in his words, and say, ‘Friend, go up higher.’

And when you do go up higher, when you have made mental and spiritual progress, then the remainder of the verse will come true, ‘Then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee.’ But the man who has not kept pace with his material wealth, in culture and the true art of gentlehood, will fail to take his proper position, will miss the full share of that glory which should be his. ‘Friend, go up higher.’ Let that be your motto for the coming year, nay, for your whole life. Go on increasing your knowledge, add to the stock of your information. There is nothing to me so exciting and romantic as this.

For my own part (I may let you into one of my little secrets), I find it exceedingly difficult to tackle that form of reading usually called the Novel. I have long ceased to read any, not because I think they are bad—far from

it—but simply because I find other things far more interesting. I feel it is a waste of time to spend weeks and weeks in reading such literature, when I know I can use my time to so much greater advantage by increasing my knowledge, accumulating real facts, by continually informing my mind and heart. And nothing excites me more than when I do come upon something I had no conception of before, something utterly new, and something I can make use of for the benefit of others. Of course, I know any number of arguments may be used in favour of novel reading, and I admit every one of them. I admit you may learn a great deal about all kinds of life, and about many various countries. But I am afraid I have got to that stage when I am satisfied with nothing but reality. I do not want facts in the form of fiction, because I don’t know whether to believe them or not. I do not want to go to the imagination of a novelist to see how certain things work out. I want to see Life work itself out before my own eyes. I want real men and women, such as we find them in their secret diaries, in biographies, in the old chronicles. I want to feel that I am dealing with facts, and that I have fact and not fiction. I want history, not in the form of a novel, but in the form of history ; so that I may know exactly what is true and what is not, how much I can trust, and how much I cannot.

This, of course, is simply my own personal feeling, my own little secret. It is a matter of private taste or train-

ing, or both ; and I simply am telling you, that I care for some things more than others which are set upon the heavily-laden table of the feast. Fact, to me, is more palatable, more enjoyable, more exciting and exhilarating than the fictitious. But, go thou up higher, friend ! For there is an abundance there to suit thy taste. Partake of it, for it is easily attainable. It is now exceedingly cheap. Make yourselves, by your acquirements, more useful to your church, your town, and to society generally. Make yourself *necessary* to them. Friend, go up higher.

And I say this all the more confidently because I verily believe that you have struck the right pathway. You are on the right road ; for I may say that perhaps nothing has delighted me more in connection with your class than the method of procedure which your Leader has adopted, and especially that particular part of it in which he has induced the members themselves to take up a subject, study it, ponder over it, and then bring the results of their thinking and reading in their own words before the class. Take it from one experienced in many methods of education, that that method of self-culture is about the best you can possibly adopt. The more of that sort the better. You will move, almost unconsciously, higher and yet higher by its means, and you will suddenly find yourselves some day in a land full of loveliness and delight.

Friend, go up higher ; higher still. This class of yours is the result of your wishes and strong desires. It found

its origin in your own hearts. It sprang from a certain kind of love which you held in your hearts. Some of you were anxious to see such a class formed, not in connection with some club or other institution in the town, but first and foremost in connection with this church, for the sake of this and no other church. This class sprang from the love and anxiety you felt for this church. It could scarcely spring from anything higher. Still keep that love in your hearts. Still feel that, although all her institutions are important and helpful, she shall always stand first in your affections as your real helper and friend. I do not say this for my own sake; because a minister is never sure how long he may be suffered. Like his Master, he frequently ' hath not where to lay his head ' for long together. But I say it because it is your religious home, and probably will be for some, if not all, of you for the rest of your lives. And it is your duty and privilege to foster such a home, and to feel that within its walls you derive the greatest good of all, that by its means you go up and reach the highest plane of all, that there you may lift up your own soul to God in prayer and hymn and psalm, that in the one part of its service you speak to God, and that in the other you should hear God speak to you through the voice of his frail servant, for every minister worthy of his calling should feel that he is not speaking his own words and opinions, but that he is speaking in the name of his God, in

the name of what he believes to be the Truth, in the name of Justice, Mercy, Forgiveness, Tenderness, and Love; in the name of the very highest and best he knows of. For unless he does this, he can never speak with authority. Unless he does this, the Holy Spirit will not descend upon him, and burn with living fire on his lips. But when he does, he should be a power of God unto your salvation and happiness.

If you, therefore, really wish to go up higher, do not neglect this means of grace, but be as regular as you can in your attendances, that they may be a benefit to yourselves, an encouragement to others to do likewise, and a great blessing to the health, the vigour, and the strength of the church; for by so doing, you will be practically saying to those younger than yourselves, 'Friend, go up higher.' You will be giving the warm hand of welcome and of friendship. You will help to make them feel that it is a real home of good-feeling and of love for them also, that the family takes notice of them, and not only the minister. This is the best way of making this New Year, and every succeeding one, a happy year. Happiness comes from using the energies which God is pleased to pour continually into our souls and bodies, in a good and worthy cause. If we cannot use them, if they become pent up and can find no outlet, we soon become restless like children who know not why they are fidgety and querulous; and we are thus not very happy. Nor shall we be happy for long, if our ener-

gies find an outlet into a wrong channel. Let our energies run forth in right channels, in trying to mount higher, grow nobler, become whiter in soul and lovelier in spirit; then, indeed, shall we find true and abiding happiness.

Let us begin the year with a higher and a holier life. Let our lives be filled with the purest, holiest love. Let us attempt high character, remembering that the measure of our purity is the only real measure of our power and influence. Thus, and thus only, can we bring the greatest blessedness into our lives; and in this way only can we testify to the world, that the church we belong to is a true Church of God and of his Christ. I cannot wish you greater gifts than a pure heart and a holy life; that holiness may be the passion of your lives. I cannot wish you anything greater or better than to attain that higher goodness, which will solve our difficulties, personal and social, and which will crown us at last with a full and eternal glory.

Thus, my brothers, do I wish you a Happy New Year, in the best and deepest meaning of that phrase. Arise, let us go hence. Friend, go up higher!

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#### ADDRESSES TO THE GUILD.

##### I.—'OUR LADY'S TUMBLER.'

SOME time ago there was published a small volume of about forty pages called 'Our Lady's Tumbler.' It is

a translation of a French poem of the twelfth century. The French MS. has only recently been discovered, and now it has been translated into English prose by one of our cleverest ministers, the Rev. Philip Wicksteed. The French poem relates a story, which I wish to relate to you now as accurately as my memory will help me.

[This address was given just after the publication of the book, and a personal 'aside' came in here, as follows:—

I saw it in Birmingham last Sunday for the first time, and read it after my day's work was done. It is one of the prettiest little stories I have ever read, and its great charm lies in the fact that it is so sweetly simple.]

In the twelfth century, apparently, there was a man whose profession was to amuse people by his tumbling tricks. He had been trained for that profession—brought up to it. But after some years of practice in it he got somewhat tired of it, and felt it was an empty kind of employment for a man with a heart and a head. So he determined to give it up and to seek entrance into a monastery. He was admitted into the monastery, and faithfully followed out all the duties of the place, getting up in the early hours of the mornings, attending mass diligently, repeating his prayers with zealous fervour, and performing all the rites and ceremonies and duties religiously. But every one who entered the monastery was expected to follow the profession they had practised previously to their entering, and work in

their own way for the benefit of the monastery. A shoemaker, for instance, would in his hours of leisure make boots and shoes for the inmates of the institution; a doctor would go on with his medical studies in case of illness there, and so on.

But no one knew what the tumbler had been; and he thought that his tumbling could never be of use inside a religious institution. He was, therefore, in fear and trembling every day that the head of the monastery would come upon him and ask him what he was doing for the welfare of the place; for then he felt he would have to confess, and it would mean that he would be turned out of doors, and he hated the idea of going back to his old life. So whenever the other monks were working at their different trades and professions, the poor tumbler used to retire to the vaults, or cellars, beneath the monastery, which are usually called the crypt, and in this crypt there was an altar and the image of the Virgin. He told his trouble to the Virgin there, explained his fears and difficulties, told her how sorry he was he could do nothing for her and the monastery, and hoped she would not be offended with him, expose him and turn him out. But he said, 'If the trades and professions of the rest are acceptable to thee, may not mine be also. It is the only thing I can do; but I can assure thee that it is exceedingly hard work. It is not light play.' He then threw off his cloak and began to tumble, and after each tumble he

came to the Virgin and told her the names of each, and of what importance was each one. By and by the perspiration rolled down his face and body, and he tumbled before the altar until he dropped down in a dead faint. And when he recovered he would begin again until the hour came for him to attend to other duties. Then in leaving he would tell the Virgin he hoped she was pleased with his tumbling, and not offended, that as it was the only thing he could do he assured her he did it quite sincerely and purely for her honour and glory; and then he would promise to come again and do the same thing every time he had the opportunity.

After the tumbler had been in the monastery some little time one of the monks began to wonder what this man did when alone down in the crypt, so he resolved to go into the crypt himself and hide there until the tumbler came, and watch his doings. He saw everything, as I have just described—the tumbling, the fainting, and his sincere attitude and remarks to the Virgin. He was much amused at the whole thing, and said to himself, ‘I shall tell this to the Head—the Abbot.’ He told the Abbot. The Abbot was greatly interested, and commanded the monk to tell no one else, but that they both would enter the crypt, hide themselves, and watch his proceedings. The proceedings were the same—tumbling, talking and explaining to the Virgin, and fainting.

But they also saw what they had not seen for a long while before, what they

had been longing to see for many a year, and which no other monk had been able to secure for their eyes, viz., they saw the Virgin Mary herself, with a troop of angels, move towards the tumbler when he was in a swoon on the floor, bending over him, kissing him, and restoring him to life. The poor tumbler had not known this; he was not conscious of his Lady’s presence. But the other two, who were in hiding, saw all, and knew that the humble and fearing tumbler was the most favoured monk in the whole monastery. He had secured what all the rest had failed to realize—the real presence of their Virgin Mary, the presence of the very Mother of God.

When the tumbler revived and left the crypt, the other two also left; and soon the Abbot sent for the tumbler to his private room, and there asked him what he did with himself in his spare hours, how he spent his leisure time. The poor man, when he received the summons to appear before the Abbot, thought the end was now coming to his stay there, and that he would have to leave the place when he had confessed all. He did confess everything, however, all of which of course the Abbot already knew; and when the tumbler had finished his story, he fainted away with fear and exhaustion. And again did the Virgin and her troop of angels come to him, this time to take him with them to his great reward in heaven, for he lived no longer. He left the monastery, but not at the command of the Abbot as

he feared, but at the invitation of Heaven. He left it, not for the wicked and weary world, as he had dreaded, but to rest in honour and live in the midst of the glory of God.

The story was then told to all the monks of the monastery, and he was buried with the greatest honours of a saint. And they all learnt that what Heaven honours and loves is not the particular kind of work that we can do, not always so-called religious work, not always our prayers and rites and ceremonies, not always clever work or so-called great work. Heaven does not honour any particular kind of work, but the *way* in which it is done, the *spirit* in which it is done, when it is done earnestly, sincerely, lovingly, for the glory of God. Heaven does not judge our actions, but the motives at the back of our actions, the spirit that prompts them; and it honours the unselfish, the humble, the tender and loving spirit. And when the spirit is right, then the humblest work becomes great work, and the very angels of Heaven gather round it to do it honour and take it up to the great God as something which they know is an acceptable sacrifice to Him and well-pleasing in His sight.

And that is the lesson for us. Our work is good, our service is acceptable, not according as it appears large or clever, but according as it is inspired with the spirit of sincerity and the spirit of love. This was the lesson which Jesus wished to teach when he said, ‘Whosoever shall give . . .

a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple’ (or, as the Gospel of *Mark* has it, ‘in my name’), ‘verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.’ The humblest act done in his name, or in the name of a disciple, will quickly bring heaven down to earth; and it will find its haven of rest in the heart.

Doing something in the name of Jesus, or as a disciple of Jesus, as one who has taken the name of Jesus upon him, and professes to be a follower of his—doing something in this way, is to do it as Jesus himself would do it, just in the same spirit as he would. We must give our cup of cold water, not anyhow, not carelessly or slovenly, not with a cold heart—the cold water must be accompanied with a warm heart—we must give it in a very special and particular way. The heavenly reward comes with only one kind of giving; it must be in a freely-flowing love. We must give ourselves with our gift, if our gift is to bring us grace and glory, if we are to receive the joy of gratitude. We must lose ourselves, said Jesus, if we are to find ourselves; and then we shall also find ourselves in a very pleasant place. We must give ourselves away if we are to save ourselves. The giver must be with the gift, the heart must be with the hand, otherwise the gift will not be glorified and made great in the eyes of God.

What the world wants, and what the world appreciates, is not so much the gift as the giver. What

the world yearns for and appreciates above everything is our heart ; and it will toss the hand aside in ingratitude if the heart is not in it. What the world values is our spirit of friendly feeling, our readiness with our sympathy, our willingness and delight in being affectionate and showing our love. That is what the world appreciates ; and that is what the Virgin Mary and her angels appreciated in the poor, humble, fearing tumbler. What he did was hard work, it is true ; but nevertheless the deed itself was a mere nothing from the point of view of utility. Still, that which glorified it and made it great, and won the favour of heaven, was the fact that he gave his whole heart and soul away with it in the spirit of the purest love. That was how he found himself in heaven later on. By losing himself he saved himself.

And that is the way *we* shall find heaven. You are all aware that heaven *can* be found here before waiting for the life hereafter. Jesus believed that the Kingdom of God could be established on earth as well as in heaven, and that the Kingdom of Heaven was within us if we but took the trouble to discover it, and clear off the huge heap of dust and rubbish with which the world has covered it and hidden it. Jesus has told us that there is such a kingdom within us—he had discovered it for himself—and he also told us how we might discover it for ourselves. He has shown us the means, the right tool to use. And he is the tool, the

means. We must work and live in his name ; use him, use his spirit, and then we shall pierce through the darkness of earth into the very light of heaven. We shall find heaven through service, self-sacrifice, through losing ourselves and giving ourselves away.

I have known people who have so seldom sought the honey of love in the hearts of their fellow-creatures, who have so seldom sown seeds of affection when it was amply in their power to do so, who have so seldom done a kindness, much less revealed any self-denial or sacrifice, that whenever they make the slightest attempt at doing something good it is the saddest and most pitiable sight one can witness—there is so little of the grace and true glamour of love in it, which should make the deed beautiful. It is for us not to be weary in well-doing, remembering that a gift is no gift, either to God or man, if it has to be asked for. It is always the unexpected, the pleasant surprise, that creates heaven, that produces real gratitude. What we expect or ask for we feel as our right, our due ; and if we have always to ask for what should be freely given in love, the accompanying feeling is one of irritation and injury rather than that of joyful gratitude. But that which we do not ask for, that which we do not expect, the pleasant surprise, does produce joy and genuine gratitude, because we feel that we are thought of (and to think that we are not forgotten is a touch of heaven itself), that we are not forgotten, that the gift brings not only

itself with it but something more valuable still with it—we feel it brings the respect, the regard, the thoughtfulness, the love of the giver as well. This is what men and women like and are grateful for, this is what the angels like, this is what Mary liked in the tumbler's gift; this is what God Himself likes in everything we ever give Him.

## II.—PARNELL'S 'HERMIT.'

ABOUT 200 years ago there lived a poet of the name of Thomas Parnell. He was also a clergyman of the Established Church, and died at the early age of thirty-nine. He wrote several poems, the best known of which is a religious poem called the 'Hermit,' the plot of which I wish to give you this evening. The aim of the poem is to justify the ways of God to men, those ways which so often seem incomprehensible to us and unjustifiable in a God who is wise and good.

The story of the poem is this:—A devout hermit lived in a cave near which a shepherd used to fold his flock every evening. Many of the sheep from time to time were stolen, and the shepherd was consequently killed by his master because he thought him implicated in the theft, and therefore guilty. The hermit, when he saw this innocent shepherd put to death, began to suspect the existence of God and his Divine Providence, and determined not to bother himself with the

useless severities of religion as he had previously done, but to mix in the world.

On his way from his cave, and on his return into the world, he was met by an angel in the figure of a man, who said, 'I am an angel, and am sent by God to be your companion on the road.' They entered a certain city together, and begged for lodgings at the house of a knight, who entertained them to a splendid supper. In the night the angel rose from his bed and strangled the knight's only child, who was asleep in the cradle. The hermit was simply astounded at this barbarous return for so much hospitality, but was afraid to make any remonstrance to his companion.

Next morning they went to another city, but in the night the angel again rose and stole a golden cup of inestimable value. The hermit now concluded that his companion was a bad angel. In travelling forward the next morning they passed over a bridge in the middle of which they met a poor man, of whom the angel asked the way to the next city. Having received the desired information, the angel pushed the poor man into the water, where he was immediately drowned. In the evening they arrived at the house of a rich man, and begging for a lodging, were ordered to sleep in a shed with the cattle. In the morning the angel gave the rich man the cup which he had stolen.

The hermit, amazed that the cup which was stolen from their friend and

benefactor should be given to one who refused them a lodging, began now to be convinced that his companion was the Devil, and begged to go on alone. But the angel said, 'Hear me and depart. When you lived as a hermit in your cave a shepherd was killed by his master. He was innocent of the supposed offence. But had he not been then killed, he would have committed crimes in which he would have died impenitent. His master tries to atone for the murder by dedicating the remainder of his days to alms and deeds of charity. I strangled the child of the knight, but you must know that the father was so intent on heaping up riches for this child as to neglect those acts of public munificence for which he was before so distinguished, and to which he has now returned. I stole the golden cup of the hospitable citizen, but you must bear in mind that from a life of the strictest temperance, simply because he possessed this cup, he became a perpetual drunkard, and is now the most temperate and abstemious of men. I threw the poor man into the water. He was then honest and religious, but you must remember that had he walked half a mile further, he would have murdered a man in a mortal state of sin. I gave the golden cup to the rich man who refused to take us beneath his roof. He has therefore received his reward in this world, and in the next will suffer the pains of hell for his inhospitality.' The hermit fell prostrate at the angel's feet, and requesting forgiveness, returned to his

cave fully convinced of the wisdom and justice of God's government.

That is the plot or story of the poem. The theology of it, concerning the Devil and Hell and so on, sounds quaint, and we must remember that it is two hundred years old; still, if theology has changed since then, the central lesson of the poem will never change, but is as applicable to to-day as it was in those days of long ago, for it is a lesson that is needed every day in every age. It is that God's ways cannot always be understood. They are a puzzle to us here very often. But it is ours to wait until he thinks fit to explain them to us. It is ours to still trust in him even though he may appear a bad angel at times. His ways are not our ways, neither are his thoughts our thoughts. With him, in his eyes, or from his point of view, failure may mean success, and success may mean failure. Our curse may mean blessing in his eyes. The affairs of this world are so often like a play, rather like a complex and intricate comedy; and we cannot very well judge of the tendency of what is past, or of the present before the entrance of the last act, which shall bring in Righteousness triumphantly. The delight, at any rate more than half the delight, in reading Romances and Novels and Dramas, consists in the fact that, as a rule, things come right in the end. And if in history, public or private, things are not yet as they should be, if things are not yet right, it is because we have not yet reached the last chapter

of its story; for it is the instinctive faith which God has planted in the human breast that virtue and righteousness, though long afflicted, must come to the top at last, that they are what God prizes above all else, howsoever despised here.

If we have this faith, *then* to cry out impatiently, and call for vengeance upon every enormity before the last act is reached, is rudely to overturn the stage before the entrance of the fifth act. And we do that because we are ignorant of the plot of God's comedy. We only know the part we are at present acting. God is a God who hides himself, and the road along which he leads us is often a long and dreary one, often dark and weary. But our human pilgrimage, after all, is not in our hands, not under our control altogether. There is a Power in the world other than human, and our journey is God-led.

For what is history throughout the ages, history with all its dark passages—I don't mean the history of mere kings and wars, that is not history as we understand it to-day, but the history of the people, their rise, their progress in civilization,—what is their history, the history of their commerce, their industries, and their industrial wars called strikes,—what is such a history with its passages of horror, of stormy revolutions, stark deprivations, its ceaseless conflicts, its groans, its blood, but the chronicle of an ever-widening realm of light, of order, of intelligence, wisdom hardly won, truth with difficulty discovered, yes and

charity, the final reward of all, and in the hearts of all, when the bitterness of the struggle is over and forgotten. It is a tale of slow, patient, but persistent and victorious progress, and no one can stem the tide,—progress that marches with the step of the conqueror, and wins its triumphs age by age at the expense of wrong, of woe, of wretchedness that waste the world.

The present act may seem confusion and chaos. The last act has not come in. There are sufferings which are really stages of development, the growing pains of the human race or of the individual. And if we ask why should God hide himself, his true self, his real nature, why does he appear to us sometimes as the bad angel, why should he not make his purpose plain, if his purpose is mercy and love, the answer he has made abundantly plain. He hides, he must hide, much of his *method*, but there is no utter or complete hiding of his Love; for over and over again in the lives of those who have gone before us we have seen good emerge out of so-called evil. We have seen that no evil is *all* evil. And no evil can crush us when we know that within us there is an immortal spirit, above and around us there is God the Father who is Love, and before us there is Eternity. There is ample time yet. Let us wait for the last act.

### III.—THE SPIRIT OF THE HIVE.

It is fitting at this time of the year, to turn our thoughts to the Book of

Nature, and read some of the lessons that she has written therein. And this evening, I should like to draw your attention to the life of the Bee, which is such an active, industrious, methodical, and thrifty little creature, and has been inspired with a spirit that we consider to be the highest spirit of religion. Maurice Maeterlinck, who has been called the Belgian Shakespeare, but who lives in Paris, has written a book called 'The Life of the Bee.' (Translated by Alfred Sutra. Publisher, George Allen, 5/- net.) He has himself devoted much of his leisure to what is among the most enchanting of country pursuits, and this book of his will probably endure when much of his other work will be forgotten.

There is real simplicity and sincerity in this book, whereas in so many of his others he is constantly posing, and there is affectation and elegant insincerity. But here we get real blossoms and real breezes, the actual condition of things in all its simplicity and truth. And when he comes to describe the working of the Bee community, its method of building up its home with its scores of cells, its desire to save and store its honey, and above all its passion for sacrifice, we reach the religious aspect of their doings in which lies the lesson for all human communities.

He calls this chapter, 'The Spirit of the Hive,' and he describes the spirit at work. They are ruled by this one spirit, which sweeps everything before it. It seems to have some great sense of Duty which animates them, and to

this sense of duty everything is sacrificed—wealth, happiness, liberty, yes and even life. It regulates the number of larvæ that shall develop into bees, and contrives that these shall accord with the number of flowers that brighten the country-side. It dictates the queen's course, and warns her that she must depart. It compels her to protect those that are to be her own rivals. When flowers are plentiful, and the spring-time promising, it will permit certain of the royal brood to come into being. At other times, when the season wanes and the flowers grow fewer, it will command the slaughter of the whole imperial brood, that the period of revolutions may close, and that work may become the sole object of all.

The spirit of the hive is prudent and thrifty, but by no means niggardly or mean; and so, when there is an abundant supply during the summer days, three or four hundred drones are allowed to live,—'three or four hundred foolish, clumsy, useless, noisy creatures, who are pretentious, glutinous, dirty, coarse, totally and scandalously idle, insatiable, and enormous,' so Maeterlinck describes them. But (after the queen's impregnation), when flowers begin to close sooner and open later, the spirit one morning will coldly decree the simultaneous and general massacre of every male, and they submit to it as in some way necessary and right. It is their duty to die, when duty calls them so to do.

The spirit of the hive regulates the workers' labours, with due regard to

their age; it allots their tasks to the nurses who attend the nymphs and the larvæ—the ladies of honour who wait on the queen, and never allow her out of their sight. Then, there are the house-bees, who air, refresh, or heat the hives by fanning their wings, and hasten the evaporation of the honey that may be too highly charged with water; the architects, masons, wax-workers, and sculptors who form the chain and construct the combs; the foragers who sally forth to the flowers in search of the nectar that turns into honey, of the pollen that feeds the nymphs and larvæ; the propolis that strengthens the building of the city, or attends to the water and salt required by the youth of the nation. Then, there are the chemists of the little community who preserve the honey and prevent it going bad by dropping a little acid (formic) into it from the end of their stings; the capsule-makers, who seal down the cells when the treasure is ripe; the sweepers who keep the public-places and streets of the hive irreproachably clean. Then, there are the bearers who remove the dead bodies; then the sentries of the guard who keep watch on the threshold by day and by night, who question all comers and goers, recognize the novices who return from their very first journey, who scare away vagabonds, poachers, loafers, loiterers, expel all intruders, attack foes in a body, and, if need be, barricade the entrance. Yes! the Spirit of the Hive dictates duties to every inmate of the city.

And, lastly, it fixes the hour of the greatest event of all the year—the great annual sacrifice, a sacrifice offered, not so much for the safety and welfare of the living community, but for the well-being and prosperity of the race, of those who are to come after them; the time, that is, of the swarm, when we find a whole people, who have reached the topmost pinnacle of prosperity and power, when they have amassed great wealth, enough and more than enough of their honeyed food, suddenly leave the hive, and abandon all their wealth and their palaces, all food and shelter, their homes and the fruits of their labour, for the sake of the generation that is to come, but which is lying sleeping in the grub stage in certain cells of the hive. When the young wake, there will be plenty for them until they are old and strong enough to go forth and secure more when the year is also old enough. There will be food for them, and a home for them to shelter them when they awake into new creatures, and have found that they have grown wings and fur.

This is the annual sacrifice, when the old community swarms together, leaving everything to and sacrificing everything for the sake of the young, and themselves content to encounter the hardships and perils of a new and distant country and an unknown future.

Where are all human beings in comparison with these little brothers and sisters of ours? How do *we* stand? It is a real sacrifice on their part; sometimes it means ruin,—it always

means poverty. The thrice-happy city is scattered abroad, in obedience to a law which is higher and stronger than their desire for happiness. It is the law of Duty, decreed for them. The bees have not made that law. Some One else has made it; they rigidly obey it. The Deity has made a similar law for ourselves, and written it in our hearts. Let us only try to imitate the firm faithfulness of the bees in always obeying the law of our nature,—which is the law of God,—in doing our duty at whatever cost, and when our pleasure clashes with it to sacrifice our own pleasures, knowing that we shall ultimately be the nobler and happier by so doing; and let us do it not sulkily or sullenly, or in a pouting spirit, but always in love and with a cheerful spirit, knowing that there is One above who observes the sacrifice, and He will reward us openly with the highest joy.

E. D. PRIESTLEY EVANS.

#### FOR A CONSECRATION SERVICE.

TAKE our pledge, Eternal Father,  
Though the way we dimly see,  
Strengthen Thou our earnest purpose,  
Till it leads us on to Thee.

Standing for the Christ-like spirit,  
Facing towards the morning light,  
We, thy children, pledge our service,  
Lead us, Father, in the right.

Take our pledge, and let it hold us,  
Ever in thy perfect way,  
Till we come into thy Kingdom,  
Through the purpose of this day.

F. B. MOTT.

#### GUILDS AND THE GUILDS' UNION.



OW many things, influences, institutions, movements, arise out of the fact that man is a social being, and will not be alone, if he can help it, in any of the interests of life! Human society is an elaborate network of brotherhoods, churches, clubs, cliques, orders, federations, circles, schools; all testifying to man's need of fellowship. The first and simplest relations of the family run on and out in many directions, and multiply themselves till hardly any man stands entirely alone. We enter into all sorts of voluntary companionships. Like gravitates to like. Those who are interested in the same pursuits, ideas, ways of life, pleasures, hobbies, tasks, come together for mutual helpfulness. They find in association a strength and encouragement they could never find alone.

But the powers of life may nourish evil as well as good, and the passion for fellowship may express itself in the confederacy of vice with vice as well as the union of virtue with virtue. Josephus tells us that once in the siege of Jerusalem, the beautiful gate of the Temple, so hard and heavy to move, 'was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night.' And he says that some thought it was a good omen, 'as if God did open them the gate of happiness.' But others

thought it very bad, 'as if the gate was open to the advantage of their enemies.' So the gate of human comradeship stands wide open. Is it for good or evil?

It is in youth that the passion for comradeship is most alive. Then it is that heart easily unites itself to heart, then it is that friendships are made, associations formed, companions chosen, causes espoused, which largely make or mar all the other days. It is the wisdom of parents, teachers, churches to see that the opportunities for right and healthy relationships are more abundant and more attractive than those which would throw the youth into wrong or mere frivolity. The school does this for the child; the church for the man. But that critical period between the two which we call youth is too often neglected. For some indeed it is provided with companionship in the college or university; for others, the factory and workshop supply the craving for association. Outside the sphere of these, however, there are large regions of life, great districts, broad fields, where the young wander, drawn hither and thither by magnetic attractions, whose spells are upon them before they are aware. It is in this region the well-wishers of the young will labour to build up a moral and spiritual kinship, friendly, healthy, quickening, in sympathy with the hopes and enthusiasm of the spring, where the common interests are contagious of good, and the very atmosphere is redolent with the breath of things high, pure, sane, and lovely.

This is the primary object of the modern Guild. It is true that in some cases the original idea of the Guild as a league for tried and skilled fellow-workers is the leading motive. But there is no reason why the two objects should not be united in the same organization. Indeed it will generally be found in the formation of a Guild that it is desirable, in the first instance, to bring together as many church and school workers as possible to constitute the nucleus of the new society. Not without their help, experience, and encouragement can the Guild hope to enter on a successful career. Yet as a matter of fact the Guild movement which has become so striking a feature in the life of the Congregational, Wesleyan, and other great churches, has chiefly had in view the bridging over the gulf between childhood and manhood, and between the Sunday school and the church. Its remarkable success has been due largely to the fact that it has found the missing link between the two. In providing a companionship for youth at its most critical period, a companionship of sympathy and service, and one in which Religion is the centre of a varied round of interests, the Guild has immensely strengthened the hold of the church upon its young, and largely solved one of its most difficult problems. That is the glad acknowledgment of leaders in the Congregational churches. The old idea that the Sunday school is the natural stepping-stone to the church has broken down. Only in the case of

a very small minority does the one lead to the other. In a well-known Midland town there are more children on the rolls of the Sunday schools than on the rolls of all the day schools, Board and denominational, put together. Yet the membership of all the churches and chapels does not equal one-half the number of the children in the Sunday schools. Not more than ten per cent. of the scholars become attached to the churches.

We have further learned that they are not to be retained by what has been called the secularization of the church. It turns out that it avails little to establish gymnasiums, football clubs, and dramatic clubs, dancing or science classes, and other cheap attractions. If these are all, they can be had equally well, and in many cases of better quality, elsewhere. These societies have no necessary connection with the church, and the church that is dependent on them for its supply of members is surely in a destitute spiritual condition, and may well change its name and function. Excellent and legitimate as these things are, they are no substitute for Religion, and unless we can make Religion central, permanent, attractive, inspiring, lovely and of good report, anything else will prove a dismal failure. Our churches exist, *first of all*, not as centres of social attraction, nor for the purpose of providing innocent amusement, but for the culture of reverence, the nourishing of the devotional spirit, the diffusion of religious knowledge, the

inculcation of right principles. The only way in which we can keep our young is by attending to their religious instruction, and supplying the means and opportunities for its training. Everything else is subordinate—not to be ignored, indeed to be amply and generously aided, but still subordinate. An active Guild will have many branches, social, educational, recreative, and the like; it will take the varied pursuits and enthusiasms of youth under its shelter; but it will first of all seek to promote that religious temper which will make every activity and enthusiasm a sphere for the manifestation of fine characters. In its complete development the Guild will be a federation of the various classes, societies, clubs and institutions that exist especially for helping the young as they enter into the vivid and virile life of the great world. The Guild endeavours to retain, amid an appropriate religious environment, those who have grown up in our families and schools and are now approaching manhood. It steps in at a time when the young are feeling the spell of influences many of which would draw them away from the best things, and by providing counter-attractions under the auspices of the church would make Worship a joy and *not* a servitude; Responsibility an inspiration, not a burden; and Service for others a daily sweetener of the ways of life.

So much of the religious life of the young perishes for lack of three things, —(1) systematic instruction; (2) self-

expression ; (3) hearty and gracious encouragment. The Guild aims at supplying those deficiencies. First, with regard to religious instruction, it has been found possible by the Guilds connected with the larger denominations to frame schemes of study, reading, lectures, essays, etc., in which the youth of their communities have been deeply interested, and by which their religious knowledge has been broadened and systematized. What is possible for others is possible for us. Secondly, it is a great gain and impulse to the religious life that in some way or other it should give expression to itself. It is true such expression need not be by words ; it may take the form of deeds. Yet the audible expression of the life of the soul in hymn and prayer, or by the relation of its hopes, doubts, fears, joys, experiences, has been too much neglected among us. But to express a feeling is to strengthen it ; to hide it away and refuse it expression is to smite it with paralysis. In rebound from the unreality and cant of some form of religious expression we have gone to the other extreme, and banished all mention of religion from our talk. In how many homes do fathers and mothers lament that religion has not told upon their children as they could desire. But what direct effort has there been to make it tell ? What a silence there has been about religion ! And the little germ of religion in the heart of some youth—how often it dies down because he is too ashamed, or too nervous to express himself. Now the

Guild encourages the young to take an active part in the conduct of religious services—if only the reading of a poem or book, or announcing a hymn. It asks from them contributions to the edification of its members—essays, papers, letters in which they speak of their own difficulties or explain their own point of view. To talk of religion in a perfectly simple, healthy, natural way is a great means of religious culture and source of religious strength. Thirdly, the Guild gives the encouragement of members to the efforts of the individual ; he is a member of a body ; others are in manifest sympathy with him ; he has the buoyancy and enthusiasm which arise from a sense of companionship in great interests. He is backed up by the public opinion of those with whom he is in constant association. He is a soldier in a regiment, proud of its colours, inspired by the sense of fellowship in a great cause, kept in the line of march by the example and presence of kindly comrades.

A Guild, or something corresponding to a Guild in idea and work, is as necessary a part of church activity as a Sunday school. The debating class, reading circle, cricket, football, and cycle clubs, recreation evenings, and social gatherings of the young, as well as their Bible classes and more directly religious work, should all be part and parcel of the Guild. For it is one of the aims of the Guild to banish from the minds of the young the old mischievous division between secular and

sacred. It therefore combines in itself and by its own agencies scope for athletics, for domestic, literary and musical faculty, for social enjoyment, no less than for kindly service, earnest, truth-seeking and reverent worship. The Guild would organize the young life of our families, churches, and schools not in any Pharisaical or pietistic temper, but in the good, sane, and humane spirit of Jesus. It would include many social pursuits proper to youth. It would bring together the young of all classes in a fellowship where class distinctions should be forgotten. It would stimulate mental growth, helping its members to form and express their thoughts. The Guild would be the servant of the church by providing workers for its institutions, and by making membership of the church the natural result of membership of the Guild.

Impressed with the importance of the Guild movement, and conscious of its possibilities of useful service, the National Conference at its Leicester meeting commissioned the Committee to consider how it might be organized and brought before our churches. The Committee appointed a sub-committee to report on the whole matter of young people's religious societies, with a view to the formation of some central body for their help, and to promote their growth. The sub-committee, after inquiry and much deliberation, recommended that a 'National Conference Guilds Union' be established, to

bring the existing Guilds into communication with each other, to provide them with suggestions and literature, and to assist in the founding of new societies.

Under the authority of the Conference Committee, a public meeting of all interested in the Guild movement was held in the Little Portland-street Chapel, London, on Thursday, May 30th, when the proposed 'Guilds Union' was formally constituted, and officers and council duly appointed. One of the first duties of the council is to make known and get a way for the Guild idea. The council will be glad to make arrangements for a deputation to attend any meeting that is called in connection with our churches and Sunday schools to consider the formation of a Guild. They have prepared a useful little book of 'Services of Worship' for use in Guild meetings, in the hope that it may be found generally acceptable and prove a link of union between the various associations. They also propose to issue a yearly manual giving statistics of affiliated Guilds and Societies, suggestions for their formation and conduct, topics for Guild addresses and Bible Class study, together with other matters likely to be of service in the development of Guild activities. Further information may be obtained from the Secretary, the Rev. John Ellis, Pisgah House, Broomhill, Sheffield.

JOSEPH WOOD.

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## HOW TO GET AND HOW TO KEEP AN ADULT CLASS.

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**I** DO not know how far the experience of one man, who has been working for a number of years among young men, may be helpful to other teachers; but as you, Mr. Editor, have been kind enough to say that what I may have to tell may be of service to others who are working in different parts of the country for the benefit of our elder scholars, I accede to your request to tell my story.

I began this work some seventeen years ago, in succession to Mr. David Heap, who left me some twenty or thirty young men, all bent on good work. In our city (Birmingham) there are a number of adult classes, or early morning schools, as they are called. These classes were established for the purpose of teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic, with an occasional address from some leading citizen. I cannot speak too highly of this work. It has been a great blessing to the city, and for a number of years has flourished under the personal influence of such men as the late William White.

But the difference between these classes and our own is this: that while they have devoted their time to helping those whose education had been neglected, or to the picking up of the threads of lost opportunities,

we have been engaged in stimulating the minds of the men; of widening the boundaries of thought and of feeling. Some of the men are engaged in reading the works of the best authors. Having read, they bring the result of their reading to the class in the form of a paper, which paper is sometimes commented upon by their class-mates, often with the best educational results.

We have had men coming to the class with papers on almost every conceivable subject—scientific, Biblical, or political. To take only one of the programmes, viz., that of the first quarter of this year: we had no less than ten of the men reading papers during that quarter on the progress made during the last century in the following subjects:—Literature, Biblical Criticism, Social Life, Education, Politics, Sport, Industries, Equality, the Housing of the Poor, and Science. Seven out of the ten were papers showing marked ability; and all were infused with enthusiasm and the desire to do good.

In dealing with classes of this kind it is of course a good thing to feed the minds of the men; and this is done by a short devotional service, the men joining in the Scripture reading and the Lord's Prayer; after which an address is given by the teacher. This, I say, is a good thing; indeed, if a teacher would be successful, this cultivation of the higher nature of the men must *never* be omitted, for it is the foundation-stone on which all their own good work rests. But it should

never be forgotten that the men have ideas and ideals of their own, which now and then they would fain give expression to. It is a good thing to feed the mind of your scholar, but it is far better that he should be made to feel the springs of thought working in his own mind, compelling him to speak out like a man before a roomful of his friends, who are always ready to listen with reverent attention to the man who gives time and thought to the production of his paper.

These heartfelt expressions of the men have often given me an insight into the real character of the writer, as I have followed him step by step into the land of hope and aspiration.

There are times when a man likes to speak of the things which lie nearest to his heart—nay, when he feels that he must unburden his soul. And so far as my experience goes, he never abuses the opportunity which is thus given to him.

In this way there grows up a strong bond of sympathy between the leader of the class and the one who is thus honestly desirous of helping in its work. The class is now no longer a 'one man' institution, for there has arisen, naturally, the feeling that we are fellow-labourers in the same field of usefulness. From the thoughts, often so well and always honestly expressed, there grows up a sense of comradeship which, in many instances, deepens into a life-long friendship, the influence of which no man can measure.

In the case of our class, in addition to the work of the teacher and that of the men, we have had from time to time the valuable assistance of the minister of the church, whose active sympathy is so necessary to the successful working of an institution of this kind. We have also had the benefit of the teaching of some of the leading men and women of the congregation and of the city. This variety in the teaching is not only interesting to the men, but it tends to the breaking down of all those narrow views of life and of religion which have ever been the bane of all true fellowship.

Besides the usual subsidiary societies such as cricket, sick, and saving clubs, we have what is called 'The Samaritan Fund.' It is a free-will offering which produces about £10 a year, and is intended to help the sick and needy members of the class. We have also a scheme for giving a good breakfast to the poor children of the streets on Christmas morning. We have between three and four hundred of these little visitors.

And last, but not least, we have a Men's Recreation Club with ninety members. Here the men learn to know one another even better than they can possibly do in the limited time at their disposal on the Sunday. Many and splendid are the things which have been done within the walls of this club for the physical and moral well-being of the members. I have known men vie with one another in deeds of real kindness and words of

true sympathy for the helpless and the depressed.

Such is a brief sketch of our class and its institutions. But I must not omit to mention one important fact, viz., that the management of these institutions is practically in the hands of the men themselves. We have large committees, with a good supply of officers, with regular monthly or quarterly meetings, and no meeting is felt to be complete without the presence of the teacher of the adult class. Our safety and our success lies in the fact that we believe in personal responsibility. We believe in sharing the work of the class. The more this idea of sharing the work is fostered and developed the keener will be the interest displayed by the members, and the stronger and more useful will the institutions become.

All I have said respecting men's classes apply equally to classes for young women. I am no believer in mixed classes. I believe that much more good can be done when they are separate institutions, where each can work at their own problems, in their own way and without let or hindrance. During the last two years we have been trying the experiment with about eighty young women. So far it has been very successful. Some of the papers written and read by the young women have been characterized by sound common-sense and in the spirit of reverence.

Is it not possible that in other cities, towns, and more populous villages

something similar to this could be done, not only for but also by the young men and women? No doubt differences of method will suggest themselves; but if people will only use their best tact and common-sense in this business, they will succeed often in ways that will astonish them.

W. J. B. TRANTER.

### CHRISTMAS BELLS.

THERE'S a time to plough the acres,  
And a time to sow the grain,  
There's a time of golden sunshine  
And a time of falling rain :  
And at Christmas comes a season  
When the world must pause awhile  
Just to hear the Bells a-ringing,  
And give back the children's smile  
Life is often so perplexing,  
Seems too weary to be borne,  
And to those who watch for morning  
How far-off the distant dawn !  
Yet a word that's kindly spoken  
Brightens all the livelong day,  
And the children's happy voices  
Send the dark mists far away,  
When a friend will stand beside you,  
In Life's battle take your part,  
When you hear a sweet song floating  
From the singer's very heart :—  
These are moments sent to gladden  
Every life throughout the year—  
Ah ! just see if you can brighten  
Some sad heart with Christmas cheer.  
Just a word—so few are needed,  
Just a look into their eyes,  
And the world will be the better  
When it knows you sympathise  
With the sorrow and the sunshine  
That must come, in God's own time,  
To His children just as surely  
As the Bells at Christmas chime.

I. M. R.

## Shore Life.

**M**HEN I was asked to write something for the *HELPER*, and to illustrate what I wrote, I determined to spend my summer holiday at the seaside, and to choose a place where there were rock pools; for, thought I, many of the children who will read what I write will perhaps spend their holiday also at the seaside, and they will go paddling about on the sands most of the time; but some of them will get tired of play, and will clamber among the rocks, over the damp seaweed, when the tide is out, and they will find all sorts of strange things, quite different from any to be found inland, and they will be glad to be told something about what they have found. Seaweeds, and the animals of all sorts which we find hiding in pools under the seaweeds are many of them very beautiful, others are very strange in shape and habits; others again, at first sight, are rather gruesome and ugly. But whether beautiful or not, we have only to study them to find them very full of interest, and wonderful in many ways, beyond the imagination of people who only glance at them and pass by them without careful study.

So, as I want very much to get you—teacher as well as scholars—to study and care for just the things I care for, I am going to describe a few things which I found when away for my holiday.

Last year, I wrote about ‘My Pond,’ which was no more *mine* than it was *yours*. It belonged to me only because I loved to study the habits of the creatures living in and about it. Well, then, see how ambitious and greedy I am! I will tell you about ‘My Sea Shore,’ now; mine, because, if I will, I may learn and fill my mind with all sorts of interest in the life of the Sea Shore.

And, indeed, if it comes to that, then this earth also is mine—if I will have it! Mine, not to fight with others for a bit of it; but mine to look at and learn about, and love more and more, the more I find it beautiful and wonderful.

So, in this spirit of loving study, let us—teachers and scholars—go straight to God’s world, and see with what love and wisdom He has made it and its creatures beautiful with His own beauty, wonderful with His own surpassing wonderfulness.

The place I visited—or rather the places—were in the Isle of Man. Look at your map of the British Isles. Right in the middle it is,—a little island, and at the south of that little island are two small towns (or villages), called Port Erin and Port St. Mary. They are about a mile and a half apart, and half way between them I found a place to live at, where the landlady was exceedingly good-natured. Perhaps you may wonder why I mention this; but I can tell you it makes all the difference, when you are studying sea life, if your landlady is good-natured.

PRAWNS AT HOME.







PRAWNS AT HOME.



If she is, she will lend you jars and pickle-bottles to hold the things you find, and, better still, she will not scold if you should spill a little seawater, or if some lively animal should want to wander round and inspect the premises. Now, my landlady's name was Mrs. D., and she simply let me do what I liked, and stood in such awe of my microscopes and my specimens, that I could leave them at any time and feel quite sure that when I came back they would not be 'tidied away,'—into the cupboard, or, worse still, on to the dust-heap!

So, when you go to the seaside to study the Shore Life, do be careful about the landlady, and get on the right side of her,—it is half the battle.

The next thing I did was to hire a boat—all for myself, so that I could go out just when I liked, and with a light net dragged astern catch the creatures that float and swim. The man whose boat I hired was Paul Kelly, and a good fellow, too, for he not only helped me with a boat, but sometimes took me out in his big boat to the place where he let down his lobster-pots. I can tell you I was in luck, when I went with him, for the lobster-pots came up with a few lobsters and crabs in them, which Paul kept,—but clinging to them were scores and hundreds of other creatures, which he let me pick off all for myself. In this way, I got things which live from sixty to a hundred feet below the surface, and which never are to be found on the shore.

Now, there is no time to tell you

even the names of all I found; but I will describe three things,—things which perhaps you may yourself find at the seaside either in the Isle of Man or almost anywhere else on the coasts of the British Isles. And in choosing these three, I will take one from the rock pools on the shore; one which I caught in the tow-net, on the surface; and one which I picked off Paul Kelly's lobster creels.

#### 1.—THE PRAWN.

Now look at the picture I have drawn—'Prawns at Home.' It is a made-up picture. In one of the clear rock pools fringed with sea-weed of various colours, chiefly brownish green, I caught a few prawns. Prawns such as these are caught and sold as 'pink' shrimps. They are pink when they have been boiled, but when they are alive they are no colour in particular—that is to say, they are almost as transparent as glass, and what few markings they have are the same colour as the weed of the pool, and help to make the prawn invisible to its enemies. I did not see any of these prawns before I caught them. What I did was to push a light net quickly into the water and among the weeds and take my chance. It did not seem to be a very good chance either, for, often enough, the net came out with no prawns in it. Small fishes there were, and lots of other things; but your prawn is a lively and nimble fellow, and can take himself out of the way before you can

say Jack R———, in the twinkling of an eye! So it took me half an hour to secure the eight lovely specimens about which I am writing. And lovely they were! When I had put them into one of Mrs. D.'s glass jars, filled with clear sea water, they looked like creatures made of crystal, with faint patterns of green, or brown, or purple or red in thin lines, and dots about their bodies. These colours just matched the various sea-weeds in the pool, and I brought home a little of the weed for the prawns to rest on in the jar. Now, I said above that my picture is a made-up one—*i.e.* I had to let my prawns get very restful and quiet in the jar, and then make a rapid sketch of first one then another, in various characteristic positions. It is not easy, but it is delightful work! If you like drawing, try it; for I can tell you, you will learn much more of the forms and uses of the parts of animals so than by any other method. I have set down in my sketch two of the prawns resting on weed, another in the position he takes when slowly swimming *forward*. I tried to draw one as it appeared making a dart *backward*, as they always do when alarmed, but the action is much too quick to be caught by the eye—all one sees is that the prawn which was here, in a flash as of lightning, is yonder a foot or eighteen inches away.

There was one beautiful thing to be seen about the living prawns in a jar of clear sea water which can never be shown in a sketch—not even a coloured

one—and that is the rainbow colours that shine from various parts of the body when the sunlight falls upon it. Sometimes the whole prawn seemed to be living mother-of-pearl.

Now, I hope if ever you go to the sea-side and hunt for things in the rock pools that you will find one or two prawns. If you do, keep them for a few hours in clean sea water, and watch them carefully. They are active little fellows, and seem almost intelligent. If you drop a bit of uncooked fish into the water, they will most likely invite themselves to a fish dinner. It is very amusing to see how they investigate the tit-bit, touching it with those feelers which stand out in front—I suppose they are smelling and tasting if it is good—and their queer eyes, which stand on stalks and which are moveable, are also diligently used.

Now, let us try to understand a little about these beautiful and active creatures which are so alert and so well provided with limbs and other organs; and if you cannot get living prawns and sea water to keep them in, you can at all events obtain some of the pale pink shrimps (which are really prawns) at the fishmonger's, and instead of eating the biggest and most perfect of them, save them for closer observation.<sup>1</sup> Then, when you do go to the rock

<sup>1</sup> The pink boiled prawns may be kept for any length of time in the ordinary methylated spirit, and taken out for dissection as required. The larger prawns are easier to dissect, but they are more expensive, and are not the sort likely to be found on a visit to the sea-side. Still, one or two carefully dissected would give the scholars a good idea of prawn structure.





*Diagram of Praun (Left side only)*



- a Long Feeler or Antenna
- b Antennules
- c Beak.
- d Eye.
- e Organs of mouth.
- f Carapace covering Cephalothorax.
- g Joints of Abdomen. ("Tail")
- h The Five Walking Limbs.
- i Swimmers.
- j Tail.



pools—and find the living prawns, you will better understand them and admire their wondrous beauty of form and delicate transparency.

Let us suppose, then, that we have obtained a good specimen of a pink prawn at the fish shop. We will first lay it down on its right side and look at its general shape. Here is a black-board drawing of one straightened out a little so as to be nearer the shape of a living prawn.

People generally talk of the head and the tail of a prawn as if that were all the animal possessed. As a matter of fact, the so-called head of the prawn contains a great deal more than just its head. Inside that big case are to be found the prawn's stomach and liver and heart, and the gills by which it breathes. The name that has been given to that big part which we call the head is so terrible that I hardly dare to write it down. But it is no use playing the coward, so here it is, 'Cephalo-thorax' (say 'head-chest'); and the case which covers it is called the 'Carapace.' Now in the prawn which lies before you, notice that long spine in front of the carapace, which looks like a double-edged saw. What a protection that must be! What fish would be so hardy as to try and swallow a spiny prawn?

Next notice—stretching out in front of the carapace for ever so far a number of long feelers. The longest pair I find is made up of 200 joints in each feeler. When the prawn is alive it can bend and move these long feelers

in every direction and it is very amusing to note the way they are carried. When the prawn is swimming slowly forward, the long feelers stick out on either side to give warning if danger lies to left or right. [See the first picture, 'Prawns at Home.'] But if the prawn thinks he is being followed, at once the long feelers stretch over his back, and as they are longer than the body they give him timely warning of any enemy in the rear. Then if something right in front attract his attention he brings his long feelers with a grand sweep right forward, and if they report danger ahead he is off like lightning, backwards with one stroke of his tail. These long feelers must be very sensitive. I tried an experiment to test them and succeeded in puzzling the prawn mightily. I heated a thin glass tube in the gas and when it was red hot pulled it out into a very slender glass hair. When it was cool I dipped it into the water and gently touched one of the feelers of my prawn. As it was glass he could not see it in the water, and as it was as thin as hair he could hardly feel it either. Yet the right hand feeler told him there was something there. Then the left hand feeler was brought over and it also felt something. It was quite a mystery—it was uncanny—the prawn did not like it at all—so with a mighty stroke he sent himself flying backward, and came with a bump against the side of the glass bowl in which I kept him. I tried if I could feel the glass hair with my finger tip under water, but it was

far too thin and yielding, so I concluded that the prawn's feelings were much more refined and delicate than my own.

For some time I could not make out how the prawn could scent out its food. You see, it has no nose! But lately I have read that the smelling organs of the prawn are placed at the base of the long feelers. I have heard Scotchmen say 'I feel a smell,' and if what they say of the prawn be true it also feels a smell—or uses its feelers for smelling. Another writer however does not think that the base of the long feelers is the place where the sense of smell is placed, but gives it as his opinion that it is to be found in the inner feelers, or antennules as they are called. These antennules are much more complicated than the outer feelers or antennae. There is a base joint very short, and somewhere in this is to be found what serves for the ear. Then there are two branches, one of which has a sort of branchlet lying close to it and this branchlet has about 200 fine bristles attached to one side of it. Under the microscope this is a very beautiful object. Now I think it very probable that these bristles are the smelling organ of the prawn.

Now see how well provided our little friend is with what are called sense organs, each and all very delicate, indeed so wonderfully delicate that they have to be seen through a microscope to be appreciated. It is very wonderful that even boiling does not

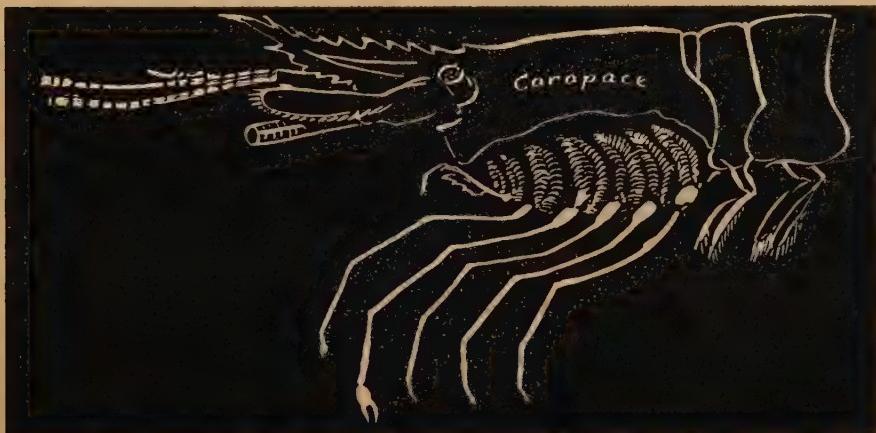
take all their beauty away, so that if you separate the long feelers and then the antennules and soften them in warm water and then look at them with a strong magnifier or a microscope you will marvel that so much what we call *trouble* is taken about so insignificant a thing as a prawn.

Then there are the eyes;—funny eyes! set on short stalks so that they can move about, and be turned on to anything the prawn wants to look at, almost like a policeman's lantern. Alas! boiling has quite spoiled them. In a living prawn they are almost if not quite the most beautiful part of the animal. They are what is called compound eyes; that is made up of a host of tiny lenses all packed in regular rows together and backed up with a dark reddish colouring matter. When the lenses catch the light in one position they look like rows of emeralds, when in another the emeralds turn to rubies, and there is one position in which they take a mixed arrangement of colour and look like opals.

Now we have seen the prawn has at the front of his body very long feelers for *touching*;—shorter antennules for *touching* and *smelling* and *hearing*; and stalked eyes for *seeing*: how about tasting? Well not far behind we may look for the mouth,—and *perhaps* find it; but not easily—for it is hidden away behind a host of small limbs that the prawn uses as jaws and teeth to cut and chew his food. I can scarcely dare to hope that any of the young

folk who may read this will have patience enough and hands deft enough to separate all these mouth parts of a prawn,—still by gently pushing aside the first pair of what may be called legs, and which the prawn generally keeps in front of its mouth as if nervous or bashful—you will see the tiny open-

oxygen. And the study of the various ways in which this refreshing of the blood is managed is very interesting and very wonderful. It seems easy enough for boys and girls, and for dogs and cats and other land animals to get fresh air,—it is all around us, and we have only—*to breathe.* But as soon as



Gills of Prawn.

ing of its mouth. But there is no tongue and the tasting of food has probably to be done by the palps or small touching and feeling threads that are attached to some of the mouth organs.

Now, how does the prawn breathe? All animals have in some way to get their blood refreshed and cleansed by the help of an invisible gas which exists in the air, and which we call

we are popped into the water—overhead—we begin to gasp and struggle, and if we cannot get our heads out of the water, we soon die just for want of fresh air. Yet there is a lot of fresh air dissolved in water, just as you can dissolve sugar in water. You cannot see it, but it is there all the same; and if you had proper breathing organs, you could take the air from the water

and use it for refreshing your blood. Your lungs are no good under water—you would need *gills*. Fishes have gills, and by causing water to flow over these gills they are able to capture the fresh air and its oxygen as it flows over them. And exactly so is it with our little friend the prawn. He, too, living all his life in water, must have *gills*, and not lungs. If you take a sharp pair of scissors, and slip one blade carefully under that carapace (remember, the carapace is the covering of the 'head' of the prawn), and cut a rather large piece away, you will find a number of feathery looking objects arranged side by side just where the long legs are joined to the body [Fig. III.] Each leg has one of these feathery gills attached to it, and when the leg is moved the gill also moves slightly. I wish I could show you one of these gills under a microscope—one taken from a boiled prawn even, but better still one taken from a freshly killed animal [Fig. IV.]. There is a sort of central stalk like that of a quill feather, and attached to it on either side are leaves like the leaves of a book, small at one end but getting gradually larger as the gill widens, and then rather suddenly getting smaller. These gill-plates are wonderfully thin and delicate, and how the blood of the prawn can get into them is a marvel. But it does so, and we know by this that each plate must be double-walled. These walls are so thin that the air can pass through them, leaving the water outside, and in this way the oxygen is obtained to refresh the blood of the

prawn. I looked at the gill of a boiled prawn just before writing this, and counted the plates. There were 280 plates in each of the gills taken from the left side of the prawn: and, I suppose, as many on the right side, which will give about 3000 plates altogether.<sup>1</sup>

Now, imagine a book of 3000 pages! That would make a good thick volume. Eh? Then, imagine all the leaves taken out and laid side by side, to see how much space they would cover. It would be a very large space, indeed. So the space occupied by the gill plates if laid side by side would be very large, indeed, compared with that which they occupy tucked away, like leaves of a book, just under the carapace of the prawn. But, if they are so hidden away, how can water get to them? Well, the way this is managed is even more wonderful than the gills themselves. The side of the prawn and the carapace, which lightly covers it, form a sort of canal through which the water is free to flow over the gills, and fixed to the second pair of the jaws which cover the mouth are cup-shaped plates, one on each, rather like a short canoe. These can be very rapidly shaken, and, in the shaking, they pump the water along the canal and over the gills. It is perfectly marvellous to see how quickly these boat-shaped organs (called 'scaphognathites') can be vibrated. If you put your tongue against the roof of your mouth, just behind the teeth, and say rrrrrrrr—

<sup>1</sup> There are seven pairs of gill-bearing limbs, but the first two pairs have not so many plates.

r-r-r, your tongue will shake something like the prawn's breathing scoop; but, oh! so slowly in comparison!

Now, do not forget to note at least some of the beautiful things that are secured by all these breathing arrangements. The gills are really outside the



Fig. IV. Gill of Prawn (greatly magnified).

body of the prawn, and so are brought into the pure water; but at the same time protected by the carapace. They are so delicate that they would otherwise be quickly and utterly ruined. Being partially enclosed, the water must be made to move over them, and the scoop does this by its pumping action. As the gills have to take up

so small a space, they are so arranged like leaves of a partly opened book as to give the biggest open space for the least room occupied. Lastly, being fixed to the top joint of the walking legs, they are moved and shaken open every time the legs are moved, and that is just when there is most need for their being kept well washed in pure water.

I have just spoken of *walking legs*—as if there were other limbs not used for walking, which, indeed, is the case. Under those joints of the so-called tail, which lie immediately behind the carapace, you will find a pair of small limbs on each segment,—that is, five pairs. There are six segments, but apparently no small pair of limbs on the last. They are really so big, that you overlook them, which sounds rather strange. Look at the beautiful broad fan of the tail, and you will find that when it is spread out the side flaps are really limbs jointed into the very small end of the last segment. The five pairs of small limbs are used by the prawn for swimming. When it wants to move forward through the water, the beautiful double fan of each swimmeret, as it is called, spreads open and is used like a paddle. I wish, again, that you could be shown one of these paddles as it is seen through the microscope [Fig. V.]. First, there is a short joint which attaches the swimmeret to the body of the prawn. Then jointed to this are two oval blades, beautifully transparent and delicate, and each fringed with a

multitude of delicate long spines. One blade is slightly bigger than the other, and has from 120 to 150 spines; the other, slightly smaller, may have from 100 to 120. Each spine is fitted with a hinge-joint, that will allow it to spread open along with its fellows, or



Fig. V. Swimmeret of Prawn

to close up. In this way, when the paddles press against the water, they spread their hundreds of spines wide open and make wide blades—but, at the end of the stroke, when they are drawn back, they close in and become quite small. It seems a wonderful amount of care to bestow upon the making of those twenty paddle blades,

to provide each one with about one hundred and twenty hinged spines—self-acting, too! Two thousand, four hundred perfect hinges! But that is not all! Each spine is clothed from end to end down each side with a multitude of side spines—marvellously fine and delicate; but stiff and serviceable in the same way as the bigger spines are. I put one big spine under a very strong power of the microscope, and counted. It had 900 side spines! That is to say, that in the swimmerets of a prawn are two million, one hundred and sixty thousand delicate spines, so regularly set in their places that I had to be very careful in counting, or my eyes would have become dazzled by their very regularity! And it is just the same, when we come to look at the fringe of the tail limbs. Each of the four leaf-shaped paddles is edged with stout spines, and these clothed with a host of others smaller, but no less regular and beautiful.

Where shall we stop? All these pages on one little prawn, and not one-half or one-tenth told about it! Truly the wonders of Nature's works and ways grow with our loving study, until one little prawn would provide interest enough to fill a whole volume of *THE HELPER*. All I have done is just to make notes of a few things which may be seen by any one who will buy twopenny-worth of boiled pink prawns, and then look at a few of them and try to understand why they were so wonderfully and beautifully made. People may think it a wicked waste of

good food to devote even a few prawns to such study; but for the comfort of these people of delicate conscience and taste, let me add that all I have used in these lessons on the prawn is *the part thrown away and not eaten!* I think it the best part—don't you? Man shall not live upon bread alone, nor upon prawns,—there is food for the mind and the nobler part of our own nature in the study of God's works and ways. If God cares for the least detail of a prawn's body, don't you think He will care even yet more for the child whose mind searches out the meaning God had in building up the prawn, and for the child's heart which is lifted up in admiration and love for His works?

## II.—SURFACE NETTING.

Those eight prawns caught in a rock pool at Port Erin, along with a few obtained at a fish shop, have provided us with more to talk about than either space or time would permit.

And it would have been just the same if we had chosen a starfish, or a limpet, or even a shore worm. When we begin to study them, and find out why they are of any particular form, or colour, or size, we are led on from one interesting fact to another until it seems that life is altogether too short for us, and we need, not threescore and ten years, but at least twice as long. There are some pleasures which quickly become wearisome, but Nature becomes

sweeter and more delightful the longer you stay with her.

Now, leaving the shore and rocks, we are going out for two or three hours in our boat to try if we can catch anything with our surface net. It is a very simple net: just a ring of thick iron wire, with a light muslin net, running to a point nearly, and then left open at the bottom so that it can be bound to the rim of an empty marmalade glass. When this is made fast to the stern of the boat with about six or eight yards of line, it will drag along the surface of the water as the boat is rowed along, and so catches the tiny creatures which live most of their early life—not on the shore, but a little way out at sea. The marmalade glass catches all that are washed into it, and protects them, so that they can be lifted out of the sea and yet all the time remain in the water.

Now, you are not to imagine that we shall certainly catch a whole lot of things. Some days, after rowing two or three hours, we may return with nothing at all; while on other days the net has hardly dragged the surface five minutes before the jar is full of life. All sorts and conditions of things—most of them very small—and it may happen that in the late summer you will find your net choked with a huge jelly fish.

Well, now let us suppose that we are out on one of the days when the wee folk of the sea are out for a holiday. After rowing about a mile across the harbour, and just outside the break-

water, we lift in our net with its jar of sea water and 'things.' This sea water, with its dancing, darting, gliding, squirming contents, is carefully poured into a big glass jar for inspection, and whilst the captives settle down we drop our net over the stern again.

Then we take a magnifier and have a good look. There are dozens and hundreds of specks darting about, and here and there are bigger things; but oh! so hard to see. One moment we seem to see all the colours of the rainbow, and the next—nothing at all; or, perhaps, if anything, only a few streaks of quivering bluish white. Then there appear to be small things like cups without handles, and saucers, floating upside down, and moving in a jerky manner. They are very small, some of them no bigger than the head of a pin, while others are as large as a split pea, a nut, and even as large as a nutmeg. What is most surprising is the curious transparency of nearly all the creatures caught. Some of them, it is true, have lovely 'shades' of colour—mauve, pink, purple, salmon pink, brown, blue, and greenish blue—but all so pure and delicate, so *modest* and unassuming. Do you know there is a reason for this transparency and this quiet colouring? The open sea is the place where hungry fishes and other big animals seek after their food—*i.e.* after many of these very creatures we have in our jar—and the less noticeable manage to escape the hungry ones, and live to full age and lay eggs,

while on the other hand the showy ones get eaten up quickly.

There are, indeed, some very gorgeously coloured animals to be found floating and swimming out at sea, but they are generally well provided either with spines like our friend the prawn, or with stings, or with coats of mail.

Now I will draw on the blackboard some of the little things I caught at Port St. Mary, and give you a short account of each, so that if you are lucky when you go tow-netting you may understand something about what you have caught.

First, then, here is a queer little fellow—so small that he could wriggle through a hole made through a piece of notepaper with a pin, and yet a really formidable-looking creature (Fig. VI.a). I am rather proud of that sketch, for he was a bad sitter, and it took trouble and patience to 'catch the likeness.' What a spine in front! and then those two long spines behind, and the spines all over him nearly. It is a good thing warriors of this kind don't grow into huge monsters and live on land, or we might think our life worth but little. And yet this wee little fellow is quite a peaceable and gentle creature, and what he lives on is beyond my finding out—so small himself, his food must be just invisible. He has his hopes and aspirations,—this little fellow, like all worthy children, for he is a child. But one day he hopes to become a man,—(*no, I beg his pardon!*) a crab. Yes, he is a baby

crab. He doesn't look it, but he is. But what delighted me most of all A short while ago he lived as an egg, was to see those 'living saucers.' —in a short while again he will develop into a creature like *b*, which is a sketch of his elder brother, caught at the same time; and, lastly, he will become a perfect crab, very small at first, but growing to full size after many days. The sketch of a crab at *c* is not made from life,—it is a rough drawing of a shore crab,—whilst the two (*a* and *b*) above it are the young of what is called the porcelain crab.

I only found baby crabs on one occasion at Port St. Mary, and I am glad I made these sketches. The baby crab was a lovely ultramarine blue, with fiery red eyes, and scarlet trimmings on his blue jacket. The youthful one (*b*) was quieter in colour and more like yellow seaweed. I believe he was getting ready to go to the bottom and live among the yellow weeds, as a crab.



Fig. VI. Life History of a Crab.

[Fig. VII.] They were really minute 'jelly fishes';—strange creatures, low down in the scale of life, lowest of all except the sponges and single-celled Protozoa. But whilst we regard them as *low*, they are not by any means common or shabby, or carelessly made. They are just perfect both in form and colour, or in colourless transparency.

I have spoken of them as like cups without handles, and like saucers, but there are many others of more complex shape. However, let us look at one of the simplest. It is like a round glass dish, rather thick in the middle and getting thinner at the rim (Fig. VII.*a*). Round the rim are dots, and attached to the dots are little threads, which, when the saucer floats bottom upwards, hang down and form a lovely fringe. These threads can curl themselves up and shorten or lengthen as occasion requires. They are pretty indeed, and when looked at through a microscope we find that they have a pattern of bosses in rings round the thread. These minute bosses are awful things! They are batteries of stings. The jelly fish itself is not half a quarter of an inch across—so these stings must be minute indeed, but they no doubt serve their owner well in the capture of still smaller creatures which are its food.

The word food makes me think of mouth and stomach. These are to be found in a sort of sack with a small four-lipped mouth which hangs from the centre of the saucer, almost like the clapper of a bell. From this sack

four canals branch off straight to the rim, dividing it into four equal portions and carrying the food fluid to the rim, which is a very busy part of the animal. Here, as we are told by people who have studied them, are to be found hearing and seeing organs. What a strange *unusual* form of life, we think, we who live on dry land and hardly understand the conditions of life in the open water,—so filmy, so delicate and flimsy even, and yet just fitted to live and rejoice in the waves with all their tossings and breakings.

We saw that the crab before it is full-grown passes through various stages very different from its final one. And many of our little 'jelly fishes' are as wonderful in the same way. Their life history is as marvellous as a fairy tale. Our little floating saucer will, by and by, develop four small clusters of eggs, one in each of those four radiating canals half-way from the stomach to the rim (Fig. VII.*a*). These eggs will swim away like little paddle steamers. They will be covered all over with a sort of living velvet, which by its movement drives the baby jelly fish through the water. At last, getting tired, the little one will settle down on the rocks or weed near the shore, and *pretend to be a plant seed*. It will fix itself as if by a root, and the other end of it will begin to grow and bud off strange living things not a bit like jelly fishes (see sketch Fig. VII.*b*). At last, when the animal pretending to be a plant has had enough of that game,

it makes a few extra big buds, and, in them, forms what might pass for little flowers. Then one by one these seeming flowers break off their stem and

ing forms, and sometimes used to find them just as the bells were floating off. I have a microscope slide made from a beautiful specimen I obtained on the



Fig. VII. Jelly Fishes and Hydroids.

float away, and are really jelly bells like the one we began with !

Now that is a wonderful story, and I know it for true, for I have followed it out through its stages. At Port St. Mary I found the floating, moving forms, and a few years ago in South Wales I used to find the growing, stand-

Gower Coast in South Wales, and from it I have made the sketch (Fig. VII.b) with the tiny bells just leaving the 'plant.' They have a comical jerky way of opening and shutting like umbrellas.

On the same illustration (Fig. VII.) you will notice an oval or nutmeg-

shaped creature with long streamers, and if I had not already used up all my notes of admiration and my best adjectives I would put in a few here to try and describe truly the beauty of this one. It was this animal to which I referred when I spoke of rainbow colours coming and flashing out and then fading to vague greyish blue.

At Port St. Mary my jar used to be nearly filled with these—(oh, dear! I've been dodging this name all along, but it's no use, it will out)—‘pleuro-brachias.’ I used to be content to call them Cydippe, but under correction it is to be the other. Well, let us call it P.

P is related in some distant way to the other ‘jelly-fishes,’ about which I have been speaking. It is half-an-inch long, clear as glass, except for eight bands which run down the sides of the oval. These bands are formed of paddles made up of fine hairs, which all move in regular order. They are as transparent as the rest of the animal, but like glass prisms they catch the light and break it up into its separate colours and flash these colours at you, until, if you're made so, you want to say things which don't mean anything, and dance about. That does not signify that you have lost your senses; it means that your senses are not enough to take it all in—it is so lovely!

I separated a beautiful specimen [Fig. VII. c] from the others, and placed it in a reserved jar of clear sea water, and then, being comfortable, it began to ‘show off.’ First it would

pretend to sulk at the bottom, *lying* there, in both senses of the word, as if about to die. Then quickly quivering its eight rows of paddles it would rise like a stately balloon, slowly and with great dignity nearly to the top of the deep jar. It took some practice to be able to catch it with the eye, for it was as transparent as the water itself. But what delighted me most of all was to see, depending from two small receptacles on the lower side of the P, its long, thread-like streamers. They could be drawn up and tucked away inside the receptacles, or they could be lengthened out until they reached from the top to the bottom of the jar of water—six or seven inches. But when I took a magnifying glass and looked more closely, I found that each tentacle was fringed with hundreds of smaller tentacles, all regularly placed and curling or waving gracefully in the water. To see such a sight as that one might well be glad to travel far, and yet more glad to have eyes with which to see. Isaiah said of idols, ‘Eyes have they but they see not’; and we men and women, boys and girls, go about the world almost as blind as the idols,—eyes have we, but how much indeed we fail to see! The figure I have drawn may help you to recognize P, if ever you are so fortunate as to catch it; but of course it gives no true idea of its wonderful beauty and delicacy.

Now I have told you about the smaller jelly-fishes, from the size of a pin's head to that of a nutmeg; I will finish by just mentioning one of the

bigger specimens—one that quite filled them as they were shown [Fig. VIII.]. the collecting jar. It was delightful work—it was madden-

When you see a jelly-fish left by the waves upon the sea-shore it can give you absolutely no idea of the same creature as it was but an hour before. One day when I was tow-netting at Port St. Mary, I noticed that I was passing a shoal of huge jelly-fishes, some more than eighteen inches across, and others, though smaller, yet glorious in colour and graceful in their easy leisurely movement. One in particular won my admiration, and I strove to catch it in the tow-net. For some time I was unsuccessful, but at length I succeeded, and carried it home to my lodging in great triumph and joy. A really perfect living jelly-fish of this larger sort I had always vainly longed to see, and I shall never forget the sight now that I have had my wish. Mrs. D. and the rest of the household must have wondered, for it was daylight again before I went to bed. In its big jar of sea water my Medusa (jelly-fish) was revealing its glorious beauties, and all night I was trying to sketch



Fig. VIII. My Medusa Swimming.

ing. Colours! Well, imagine the gold of sunset mingled with the delicate purplish blue of distant mountains and the silvery sheen of white clouds, and all semi-transparent. Form: Dome-shaped almost like a mushroom, with a draped curtain running all round its rim, hanging and pulsing with regular waving movements. The dome was so transparent that I could see the inner compartments of the strange creature; the transparent body substance golden amber, marked out with veinings of coffee brown; the draped curtain silky, like what ladies call chiffon, and with a double colour of silver sheen and purplish blue.

Where, in our little saucer-shaped bell, the stomach and mouth were placed, in our big Medusa there were intricate compartments; and, again, rich foldings of crimped amber-coloured body substance.

Then from eight places under the fringing curtain there hung down chains and festoons of sting-threads, which could be drawn up out of sight, or be let out to a huge distance—these again silvery and blue. Terrible batteries of stings are stored in these threads—not strong enough to hurt thick-skinned people, but deadly to the tender-skinned creatures of the sea, on which the lovely but dangerous Medusa feeds. It will serve to show how they act when I say that, having rubbed the skin of my finger rather thin on a rock, I chanced to touch those sting-threads. In a quarter of

an hour the thin-skinned place was blistered, and as painful as if stung with nettles.

I replaced the big Medusa in the large store glass along with my other jelly-fishes and pleurobrachias, and when I got up in the morning it had eaten them all up! It was a practical lesson in natural history which I shall try not to forget!

And now, what shall I add? I have rambled on and on; telling of a few things only out of the scores I saw when I was at Port St. Mary. Time and space are both too short to tell of more, though there were many others just as well worth notice. But my advice is: *Go and see them for yourself.* I have not been describing unusual things, but just such as you may find anywhere almost. I have seen them at Dover, at Ventnor, at Swanage, Lulworth, and Weymouth; at Bridport, Lyme Regis, and Seaton; at Dawlish and Torquay; at Ilfracombe in North Devon; near Swansea in South Wales; and at Llandudno in North Wales. So don't think they are only to be found on the shores of the Isle of Man; *they may be found at the nearest sea-side place to where you live.*

It is indeed seldom needful to wander far to find the 'beauty of the Lord,' it lies unheeded all around; we tread it under foot, we pass it by unheeded, or perhaps in the insolence of stupid ignorance dare to call it common and unclean, and pray for things that we neither need nor could

enjoy. Oh! let our prayer be for open eyes, open minds, open hearts, to seek and to comprehend, and to take into our love these tokens of *God's wisdom and God's love.*

T. ROBINSON.

[NOTE.—At the beginning of these lessons on Shore Life I said I would describe one of the animals which I found on Paul Kelly's lobster pots, but I have already exceeded the allotted time and space, so if Mr. Editor will allow me I will defer my talk on these and other creatures until 'next time.'

—T.R.]

#### 'VOICES OF NATURE.'

UNDER this title an excellent series of lessons has been prepared by Miss C. A. Martineau, and the second edition is now issued by the Sunday School Association. The author takes the young student first into the fields of geology and botany; and from the simplest illustrations (as e.g. chalk and buttercups) leads on to the fundamental principles of evolution. A chapter on mechanical 'work' introduces a less familiar but very interesting and important subject; and the titles of the chapters which follow—viz., 'The Reward of Work,' 'The Struggle for Existence and Survival of the Fittest,' 'Mutual Helpfulness in Nature,' 'Natural Beauty'—sufficiently indicate the resolute purpose of the author. Teachers who share that purpose, and who desire to give their scholars an early introduction to the works of the great modern naturalists, and to stimulate the young mind to think seriously and intelligently of life and the world, will find this book most useful. It costs one shilling net.

## The Most Precious Thing in the World.

### INTRODUCTORY.



ROBABLY most teachers believe that their particular class is composed of girls or boys of an especially 'awkward age,' which renders the task of maintaining discipline and exciting interest a peculiarly difficult one. But there is certainly one problem which alone confronts the teacher whose class is no longer composed of children, but is fast becoming the adult class. The difficulty is this: It becomes very important to select lessons which offer opportunities for the members themselves to take a real part in what is going on, over and above listening and answering questions which refer to information given in the previous lesson. The means generally adopted with a view to fulfilling this need are, I suppose:

1. Alternate reading from some book, generally the Bible.
2. The Conversational Method.
3. Note-taking.
4. Questions and Recapitulation.
5. Preparation of Lesson by Scholar.

All of these have by experience been proved to be useful adjuncts to Sunday-school teaching. Probably every teacher has his favourite method, but it is surely a mistake to limit oneself to any one method to the exclusion of all others; for each has its special use.

The first enables us to emphasize the fact that the Bible is essentially literature—containing very little exactness or definition, much artistic effort, words and phrases ‘thrown out’ at an idea; this end is only attained when *passages*, not necessarily *verses*, are read by each scholar, who is to be encouraged to read with some amount of rhetorical effect.

The second is very useful in dealing with subjects with which the scholars are, to some extent at least, acquainted. It has the disadvantage of demanding much time in class, and is necessarily of very limited practicability when the subject involves some special knowledge, as, for example, Biblical interpretation in the light of modern criticism.

The third method is perhaps the most efficient when the subject does not necessitate the accurate record of facts, but the notes become records of the scholar's own thoughts about the subject in hand. In the former case the notes have to be dictated, and so half their value is lost.

The fourth method again is very useful, but still has its drawbacks. Recapitulation by question and answer—and there is generally little enough time for that—does not afford scope enough for the development of the individuality of the scholar, who must necessarily exercise his memory, rather than his own thought, in replying. One teacher will of course display far more skill in putting questions than another, and doubtless we do not by

any means exhaust the capacity of the question method; for it is scarcely too much to say that questioning constitutes the most difficult part of the art of teaching. But, at its best, and handled in the most skilful way, and quite apart from the limited time at the teacher's disposal, it can scarcely be doubted that the method falls far short of the ideal.

The fifth method, which consists in allowing the scholars themselves to prepare the lesson, has great possibilities, but it also involves many difficulties. If the scholars are themselves allowed to select the subjects of the lessons which they, each in turn, prepare, the result is a series of disconnected subjects with no distinctly religious tendency, while subjects selected by the teacher are apt to be uncongenial, and at best the effort of the scholar lacks spontaneity. The method may with advantage be modified in the manner described in *THE HELPER* of last year under the heading, ‘How my class and I prepare,’ the scholar making himself acquainted previously with some passage or illustration which the teacher has decided to introduce into his lesson. Here, again, the applicability of the method is somewhat closely limited.

The following lessons represent an attempt to retain the advantages of this method without sacrificing the value of a planned course of consecutive lessons with a definite end in view.

Having broached the subject one

Sunday, I asked my class to tell me what each individually considered

#### THE MOST PRECIOUS

thing in life ; that is, what it is which costs the most to obtain, and is worth the most to us when we have it.

The following replies were given :—

1. A diamond.
2. Wealth.
3. Comfort, in the sense of contentment and happiness.
4. Experience or knowledge.
5. Life.
6. Civilization.
7. Reputation, in the sense of national prestige.
8. Character, in the sense of personal reputation.
9. Liberty (political).
10. Religious liberty.
11. Justice.

Of these Life was obviously disqualified by the fact that it cannot be obtained, although it may cost much to maintain ; while Character was not intended in the sense of moral excellence, and was suggested by a visitor to the class.

I therefore selected wealth, wisdom, political liberty, religious liberty, and justice. I then suggested that those who had chosen these things should in turn tell us what they cost, and try to persuade us that they were the most precious thing in life. The idea proved less formidable than might have been expected. After a little very natural reluctance the following lessons were prepared :—

#### I.—WEALTH.

*Method.* Upon my suggestion, a short sketch was written on the life of George Peabody, the great philanthropist, the matter being taken from 'Successful Men' by S. K. Bolton.<sup>1</sup> Obviously the life of any millionaire whose fortune was to some extent at least due to his own industry and perseverance, would serve equally well as an illustration of what wealth costs. Probably the story of Andrew Carnegie would be more attractive as being more up-to-date : a sketch is to be found in the 'Review of Reviews' for December, 1899.

*Cost.* Such being the cost of personal wealth, we may glance for a moment at the vast wealth of nations, and consider how much toil, hardship, and sacrifice of pleasure, and even of life, it costs to acquire and maintain. Certainly the cost of wealth is enormous, and bewildering to think of.

*Preciousness.* Turning now to the other side of the question, namely, the preciousness, we find that wealth has value in two ways :—

(1) It enables a man to purchase luxuries and comforts which certainly to some extent tend to happiness.

(2) It does put into a man's hands the power of doing immense good to others. Examples of this may readily be found in The Peabody Buildings, Hospitals, the Indian Famine Fund, the Tate Gallery.

<sup>1</sup> Published by Hodder & Stoughton. A good book for the Sunday School Library.

Against this we have to set:—

(1) Great Responsibility. How to practise wise charity is one of the great problems which meet the rich man who wishes to use his wealth for the benefit of all.

Here again Andrew Carnegie and his problem become our illustration.

(2) Money cannot buy many things without which life cannot be happy or complete. Examples:—

(a) Friendship—and the highest form of friendship—Love.

(b) Peace of mind, which in its highest and purest form can only spring from a good conscience.

(c) Happy trust in a loving Providence.

Poor Barney Barnato was our example of a man whom almost unlimited riches could not make happy.

(3) Too often wealth is bought at the cost of health, happiness, honour, uprightness, love, and inward peace, all in fact that we call soul. We turn to Watts's picture of 'Mammon,' and try to read its message. For surely there is no more impressive lesson than the message of that picture of the monster, Mammon, sitting upon a throne like a god, while his worshippers lie at his feet a ghastly sacrifice to the fatal lust for gold. Men and women, who bear upon their faces the blighted promise of something infinitely greater than the god they worship, lie there not really dead, but with faces which tell us, by their very lack of expression, of the living death within.

We write something of this in our note-books, and below it these words, 'What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?'

## II.—WISDOM.

*Method.*—In the preparation of this lesson a similar course was pursued. One of the class prepared a short sketch of the struggles of Samuel Johnson in the pursuit of knowledge. The same book ('Successful Men') furnished material for this sketch.

*Cost.*—We may supplement this illustration of the cost of knowledge to the individual by a consideration of the price paid by society. We find that the English Parliament votes annually £12,000,000 to the support of education, and this sum represents the price paid by the nation in order that every man and woman may in their childhood receive something of this precious thing—knowledge. But this amount of education is not nearly enough for any one who aspires to any especial knowledge. Doctors, lawyers, ministers of religion, artists and scientists, and many others, spend on an average half their lives simply in acquiring the knowledge necessary for the proper practice of their profession, while if such as these are not constantly learning all their lives they very soon fall behind the times and become unfit for their work.

Health and eyesight are often impaired, and many pleasures are given

up, in exchange for knowledge, without which there can be no advance in civilization and no wisdom, for wisdom is ‘the right use of knowledge.’

Then we think of the vast toil and expense which is involved in planning and thinking out, writing, printing, and publishing all the books in which the wisdom of the past is preserved to us.

*Value.*—It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the value of knowledge from one point of view—that is, as regards what is called success.

1. In every form of trade knowledge is indispensable. Labour is becoming so complex that all labour, except the lowest, needs a special knowledge. ‘Rule-of-Thumb’ will not do now-a-days; the ‘rule-of-thumb’ worker goes to the wall; a nation of ‘rule-of-thumb’ workers would soon go to the wall; neither can compete with intelligent rivals who know their tools, and how best to use them.

2. Man—so small and weak physically—becomes immensely strong when he thinks and gains knowledge, and learns how rightly to apply his knowledge to his tools. ‘Feeblest of bipeds! Three quintals are a crushing load for him; the steer of the meadow tosses him aloft like a waste rag. Nevertheless, he can use tools, can devise tools; with these the granite mountain melts into light dust before him; he kneads glowing iron, as if it were soft paste; seas are his smooth highway, winds and fire his unwearying steeds.’ (Carlyle, ‘Sartor Resartus.’)

3. There is much truth in the old couplet :—

‘Evil is wrought by want of thought,  
As much as by want of heart !’

But without knowledge thought is powerless. It is scarcely too much to say that half the misery, disease, and suffering of the world is the result of ignorance. The most striking illustration of this is found in the realm of disease which we are only able to combat by acquiring knowledge of the Laws of Health. Note especially the effort that is being made to educate the public in the means of treating and preventing the spread of consumption.

4. Books may become our most valued friends. In them we may find the highest inspiration to good life, the most real and lasting comfort, the joy which only those who love books can know. Robert Southey, the poet and biographer, was above all a lover of good books. In his old age the splendid brain, which had done so much good work, at last gave way, and he was no longer able to read. But even then he loved to walk for hours in his library touching, and taking down, and fondling those books which had been his favourites. He still felt the blessing of their companionship.

And yet it is not always the man with the most knowledge who is the happiest. Knowledge cannot be the most precious thing in the world. Those who know ‘Robert Elsmere’ know what little joy all his knowledge brought Charles Wendover, the squire;

and there is surely much human experience at the root of our English proverb :—

‘Where ignorance is bliss,  
‘Tis folly to be wise.’

The author of the story of Eden in the book of Genesis tells us that all the toil and sorrow of the world is the result of tasting the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge (of Good and Evil); while another book in the Bible, Ecclesiastes, is still more certain of the hollowness of knowledge. Tradition says that this book was written by Solomon, the wise king; scholars now tell us that this could not possibly have been so; but it certainly reads like the record of the author's own experience when he says: ‘I, the preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under the heaven. Lo, I have gotten me great wisdom above all that were before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart hath had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also was a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. And how doth the wise man die even as the fool’ (*Eccles.* i. 12, 13, 16, 17; ii. 16).

The conclusion of which is that there must be something more precious than knowledge, without which a man's life cannot be happy or complete, however

learned or wise he may be. The greatest wisdom is to find out what this thing is, and to get it.

### III.—POLITICAL LIBERTY.

*Introduction.*—The growth of freedom, political and religious, and of justice in England is the glory of English history. The history of each is a fascinating study, and presents many lessons which are well worthy of study in the Sunday school. Moreover it has been the experience of the present writer that if there is one subject on which the members of elder classes are willing to speak out, it is this subject of freedom. The spirit of revolt against the power of the wealthy classes, and the apparent injustice of their relation to their poorer fellow-subjects, is often rife in the homes from which the scholars come, and, if opportunity is given, is often ready to find expression; and the very fact that the expression is generally violent and often bitter is surely all the more reason why it should be allowed to vent itself, so that, if possible, it may be softened and made more reasonable by the calm consideration of history and the means by which greater liberty and justice are to be won. This subject of political liberty was, in fact, the most successful of the course so far as the interest and part taken by the class were concerned; and this goes a long way towards success.

*Method.*—One of the class undertook to write a short essay on the history of political liberty in England, in the pre-

paration of which I assisted him by selecting a number of passages in a short and simple History of England. Gardiner's familiar 'Outline of English History' was lent to the essayist, and references were drawn up which supplied a rough plan of the essay, as follows:—

- Cost.*—1. The Tyranny of the Nobles in the time of Stephen, p. 45.  
 2. The Tyranny of John, p. 59.  
 3. The Nobles force John to sign the great Charter, p. 62.  
 4. The hard condition of the poor in the time of Edward III. 'Villeins,' p. 90.  
 5. Insurrection of peasants under Wat Tyler, a failure; p. 96.  
 6. Prosperity makes a strong 'middle class,' who are represented in the House of Commons, p. 69.  
 7. Parliament opposes Charles I. because of (*a*) unjust levies of money, (*b*) unjust imprisonment, p. 216.  
 8. The Liberty of the Press, p. 288.  
 9. The Manchester Riots and their cruel suppression create sympathy with the poor, p. 389.  
 10. The Chartist demands, p. 410.  
 11. The Reform Bill, p. 450.  
 12. Conclusion, p. 457.

The short essay written on this plan was quite satisfactory, and at the conclusion some one expressed approval of the claims of the Chartists, especially as regards manhood suffrage. This, of course, involved a digression, but promised to be of value; discussion was therefore encouraged. The teacher

guided the conversation along lines which led to the recognition of the following points:—

1. Manhood (and womanhood) suffrage is certainly the ideal to set before a nation.
2. To use a vote wisely one must know something of politics, home and foreign, and must be keenly interested.
3. Hence all men and women are not fit to have votes; to give them this power would make them a danger to their fellow-subjects, (*a*) because they would be likely to support rash or foolish policies, (*b*) because of their ignorance of their duties in serving on juries.
4. Probably at present a wider suffrage would be dangerous just in this way.

After the essay it will hardly be necessary to say much more about what political liberty has cost. If we think for a moment of all the men who have suffered in this great cause—by loss of property, by imprisonment, and even by death—we see what a tremendous price has been paid by our ancestors for the liberty which we enjoy to-day, and how great a debt of gratitude we owe to them. The moral is obvious—we must ourselves safeguard the freedom of Englishmen, and even be ready to make a great sacrifice for it. Whatever may be thought about the South African war, there can be no doubt that the great bulk of Englishmen were anxious at any cost to obtain freedom and justice for their fellow-subjects in the Trans-

vaal. If anyone has taken advantage of this and helped to bring on the war for his own ends, he has been guilty of the greatest sin we can imagine any man committing.

*Preciousness.*—Nor need more be said about the preciousness of political liberty after we have compared our own security and freedom with the misery, injustice, and oppression of those early times. But when all has been said for liberty, we find that it cannot give happiness by itself. The United States of America and the French Republic are both freer than England as far as manhood suffrage goes, but this leads to much corruption and headstrong government, and the people are certainly not happier than Englishmen. And with all our liberty there is still much misery amongst us; while on the other hand, as we shall see in the next lesson, men have known the greatest joy even when liberty has been taken away from them and they have been cast into prison.

#### IV.—RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

*Method.*—In preparing this lesson a very similar method was adopted. The scholar who had chosen this subject made himself acquainted with the landmarks of the history of religious liberty and read the story of William Hunter in Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

*Cost.*—When we Unitarians come to our Churches and Sunday schools we seldom think we are exercising a very precious privilege which our an-

cestors have bought for us at an enormous cost. And yet this is so.

Christianity was born in suffering; persecution, imprisonment, and death marked its career from the earliest times. Christ himself died the death of the cross rather than not openly preach the gospel—or Good News about God—which was such a source of joy in his own heart. He was followed (if tradition be true) by

(i.) Stephen, who was stoned to death outside the city of Jerusalem.—Acts vii.

(ii.) Andrew, the brother of Peter who was crucified at Edessa.

(iii.) Peter, who was crucified head downwards at Rome.

(iv.) Paul, who was stoned at Lystra, imprisoned and whipped at Philippi, and beheaded at Rome.

(v.) James, Philip, Matthew, Mark, Matthias, Jude, Bartholomew, Thomas and Luke, who all suffered martyrdom.

(vi.) John, who (so tradition says) was thrown into boiling oil, and, being saved from hurt by a miracle, was banished to the island of Patmos, where he was forced to work in the mines.

(vii.) Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, who was beaten to death by clubs.

At Rome from the death of Peter until the reign of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor (A.D. 306), the Christians were constantly subjected to the most terrible persecution. The great fire at Rome, famine, pestilence, earthquake, and any catastrophe to the Roman armies, were all attributed to

the Christians, who were accused either of themselves causing these things to happen, or of enraging the Roman gods against the nation. Imprisonment, racking, searing, boiling, scourging, stoning, hanging, and worrying with dogs, and every kind of torture which the savage ingenuity of the times could invent, were employed by the Roman Emperors who were determined to crush out the new religion (Foxe). All were met with a gentle fortitude and unswerving devotion to the cause of truth, liberty, and religion which constantly won more and more converts, until at last Christianity triumphed. Christianity triumphed; but in that long struggle many errors gathered round the simple, pure religion which Jesus taught, and the time was sure to come when at last those errors would be found out and men would arise, only a few at first but constantly more and more, who would strive to set those errors right. Moreover Christians, who had themselves suffered so much for their religion, had not learned to be tolerant of the religion of others. Christianity indeed triumphed, but there was scarcely any more religious liberty than before.

In England when people began to find out some of the errors which had gathered round that Christianity which had grown up at Rome they were persecuted just as the first Christians were. In the reign of Henry IV. a law was made by which such men—they were called 'heretics'—were burned to death at the stake (Gardiner, p. 103). Many

suffered death in the reigns of Henry IV. and Henry VIII. but most in the reign of Mary. In the four years 1555 to 1558, two hundred and eighty-four men, women, and children were burned to death, and sixty-four others were persecuted in other ways (Foxe, p. 584). Foxe has preserved for us the story of the martyrdom of a young London apprentice, William Hunter by name, who suffered for his religion in 1555. (Foxe, p. 390.) The offences for which he was punished were—

(a.) Reading the Bible.

(b.) Refusing to take part in the Communion Service—a Roman Catholic ceremony.

(c.) Denying that the bread and wine which were used in this ceremony were changed into the body and blood of Christ.

Bonner, Bishop of London, tried his hardest to persuade him to give in about these things, first by arguments, then by imprisonment and ill-treatment, then by promises of money and promotion, but he remained firm in spite of all temptation. His devotion inspired such courage in others that his own mother encouraged him to be faithful to the end, though she knew well what the end would be. 'I thank God,' said her son, 'I am not afraid; for I have reckoned already what it will cost me.' At last Bonner lost all patience and condemned him to death. He was burned at the stake at the age of twenty, one of the youngest and truest of the world's hero-martyrs.

When Mary died and Elizabeth

came to the throne it was the Catholics' turn to suffer for their religion, and this they did not less bravely than the Protestants had done. There were not many deaths, but it was not until 1690 at the beginning of the reign of William III. and Mary that punishment for religion was abolished, and Catholics and Dissenters were allowed to have their own Churches and Chapels (Gardiner, p. 278).

Even after this only members of the Protestant Church of England could take office in the army, navy, or state (Gardiner, p. 257); this was law until 1829, when Catholics were at last allowed equal rights with their Protestant fellow-subjects (Gardiner, p. 399).

There is a glorious roll of Unitarian martyrs who have suffered for the cause of truth and religious liberty, 'but that is another story.' Even now, though they are safe from punishment by law, there is much bitterness against Unitarians because of their religion, and this often makes itself felt very keenly. A Unitarian who is not afraid of confessing his religion will probably be made to suffer for it in some degree. Religious liberty will cost some the love of those dear to them; others will lose employment or business; while almost all will meet with bitterness, misunderstanding, and ridicule,—the last being by no means the easiest to bear.

Take all that has been paid for religious liberty and what a vast sum it is!

*Preciousness.*—When we look back

upon this long story of suffering and persecution and remember that the first time Christmas Day was celebrated publicly by a service in a church, the church was set on fire by the order of the Roman Emperor and all the worshippers killed, how precious seems our religious liberty to-day! And yet we all know too well that being allowed to worship in our own church, being allowed to speak and write what we feel best about religion cannot make us really happy, cannot give us such joy as those martyrs felt who could say with St. Paul, 'We are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken, smitten down, yet not destroyed' (II. Corinthians iv. 8), or again 'I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.' We must have something else besides religious liberty if we are to be really happy, if life is to be in the truest sense successful.

#### V.—JUSTICE.

*Method.* Again the same plan was followed. One of the lads wrote a short essay on the growth of Justice in England, based upon references to Gardiner's History. As an up-to-date illustration, the 'Dreyfus Case' was taken. The subject is, of course, far too intricate to be discussed at all fully, but the main facts of the case are easily understood. An outline sketch was prepared by the teacher.

*Cost.* The cost of Justice may

be considered under the following heads :

1. Justice among the English (that is, before the Norman Conquest).

(i.) The Blood Feud (Gardiner, p. 10). The relatives of the murdered man killed the murderer; 'a feud' so sprang up between the two families which often went on for generations.

(ii.) Later, money was accepted by the relatives of the murdered man in settlement.

(iii.) Trial by Compurgation. The accused had to bring a number of honest men who lived near him to swear he was innocent of the crime of which he was accused (Gardiner, p. 12). Failing this, there was

(iv.) Trial by ordeal. The accused had to put his hand into boiling water, or walk blindfold over hot ploughshares. If hurt, he was considered to be guilty.

2. Justice among the Normans. The Normans introduced Trial by Combat, in which the accused fought with the accuser. The idea of this was that 'God defends the right.'

3. Henry II. Judges were sent round to ask a certain number of men in each county what they thought of the dispute (Gardiner, p. 48).

4. Later these men were allowed to call upon others to give 'evidence' before them. This is the principle of the modern jury (Gardiner, p. 48).

5. The noblemen bribed and bullied the juries, so that a fair verdict was often not given. This evil was especially rife during the reign of Edward IV. (Gardiner, p. 120).

6. The Court of Star Chamber, established by Henry VII., checked this evil (Gardiner, p. 134).

7. The punishment of Death for theft and lesser crimes was at last abolished (Gardiner, p. 393).

The growth of Justice has been steady and continuous for many centuries; verdicts have become truer and more honest, because Englishmen more and more realize the preciousness of justice between man and man. Justice can only be preserved if men will make it their duty to hear both sides of a dispute fairly and without prejudice, and find out the truth to the best of their ability. The privilege of voting carries with it the duty of serving on a jury if called upon. No one is worthy of the privilege who does not do his best to fulfil the duty.

Even in these days, it may happen that a great price has to be paid in order that someone may obtain justice. An example of this is found in the history of the Dreyfus Case, of which a sketch is given in the *Review of Reviews*, for September, 1899, and need not be recapitulated here.

#### VI.—A PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

For the following Sunday no lesson was prepared by the class, as the selected subjects were now exhausted. After a short resumé of the preceding lessons, the teacher drew attention to the fact, which was probably obvious to all, that unless happiness is quite unattainable we had not yet found the

most precious thing in life. A moment's consideration is sufficient to convince us that neither the possession of great wealth, nor the attainment of great knowledge, nor the right of voting, nor being allowed to worship God as we please, nor being treated justly by our fellow-men, can of itself make us really happy, or make us feel that life is a success, or save us from the sense of failure and despair. Not only is this true, but surely a man might have all these things—as, indeed, many have—and yet be the most miserable and unhappy creature in the world. Someone suggests that contentment is the most precious thing, although very often it costs nothing, being simply a matter of natural disposition. But the ordinary contented man, who is satisfied to let things go on as usual, who does not desire improvement either in himself or in the blessings of those around him, is generally simply lazy and is really much to be pitied, for he is like a stagnant pool in some dark wood. If, as poets have often done, we can imagine water being alive and sensitive, capable of feeling joy and sorrow, we shall not doubt for a moment that water only knows joy when it is in motion. It is the streamlet, rippling over the pebbles, leaping down the cliff-side, flashing in the sunlight, singing its ceaseless song as it courses along ever deeper and wider—that is our idea of happy water; and it is surely some such idea as this that Longfellow had in his mind when he calls the Indian girl (in the poem of

'Hiawatha') Minnehaha—Laughing Water. Or it is the sea, stretching out as far as eye can reach, and every particle in motion, here leaping up in white foam where the wind has blown off the crest of a wave, there rolling its huge crested breakers along the rough coast, and dashing into spray against the rocky cliff, everywhere sparkling in the sunlight. Then, when we look beneath the surface into the quiet depths of blue sea, we seem to be looking into the heart of a life that is full of a deep joy. It is so different when we look at a stagnant pool in a dark wood; there is not a ripple on its surface, and at first perhaps we think it very beautiful in its quiet restfulness. But we look deeper into its brown depths and see the rotting leaves at the bottom, while every now and then a bubble of 'bad air' comes to the surface and bursts, disturbing those curious long-legged flies that crawl about its surface. It will be odd if that pool does not smell bad with all that decay going on beneath it. We shall at any rate feel that we are looking at water which is spending a very poor sort of life, and, what is more, does not in the least know what joys it is missing by stopping there stagnant and content. If we are satisfied with ourselves, and everything else, we can see in that pool our image in two senses instead of one. That kind of contentment is certainly not the most precious thing in the world, though probably another kind of contentment altogether comes very

near to it. We shall think more about this later on.

Now, turning to *Matthew* xiii. 44, one of us reads these words:—‘The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls; and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.’ We have read these verses because in them we have the answer which Christ gives to the question which we have been asking ourselves: ‘What is the most precious thing in the world?’ There could not be a more striking picture of the most precious thing than this: A merchant is looking at the pearls which the pearl-fishers have brought home from the sea. This is his work; he buys the pearls from the fishermen, and sells them to the princes and rich people of the land. Suddenly he sees that one of the fishermen has a pearl larger and more resplendent than any he has ever seen or heard of. He thinks it must be unique; he knows that such a pearl must be almost priceless, and that a king would pay him a fortune for it. But how to get it is the question; the fisherman is no fool, he knows he has got something good this time, and does not mean to part with it easily. The merchant tries to bargain with him, but it is of no use; the fisherman still demands a very high price. To buy it

the merchant will have to sell all his other pearls, and scrape together all the money he can. But what of that? He knows he can sell again for infinitely more than he is paying. So he went, and sold all that he had, and bought it.<sup>1</sup> Jesus says that there is something which is to us just what that pearl is to the merchant; it is worth everything that we have; if to buy it we have to give up everything that we have it will be a good bargain, the very best bargain we can ever make. And what does he say this thing is? It is the ‘Kingdom of Heaven.’ Perhaps someone will say, ‘You asked us for the most precious thing in the world, but the Kingdom of Heaven is in the next world, not this.’ But at another time Jesus said, ‘The Kingdom of God is within you’; and this, though we may not altogether understand it at present, certainly refers to a present, not a future, world.

#### VII.—THE GOLDEN AGE.

IT is difficult to see how anyone who thinks and is capable of sympathy and love can be satisfied in such a world as this. Probably no one who thinks and loves is satisfied. We have seen how liberty, truth, and justice have grown, and at last triumphed, little by little, just because people were not satisfied to let things go on in the old bad way: so that to be dissatisfied with oneself and one’s

<sup>1</sup> Hirst’s ‘Half-hours with the Parables,’ I. p. 40.

surroundings is the first step towards all progress. Who can be satisfied when there is so much suffering and misery around us? Suffering and disease are constantly with us, making us feel sad and unsatisfied. Now suffering is of two kinds:—

(1) Avoidable. A very large proportion of all the disease and suffering of the world can be traced to want of thought and want of heart. People are careless about their health, do not trouble to learn the simplest rules of health; and disease follows, health breaks down, and there is much suffering. Very often the suffering not only falls upon the careless, but involves their friends and relations too. One cannot be satisfied with this state of things.

(2) Unavoidable. Often, however, we cannot trace the suffering to any wrong-doing or thoughtlessness. We say what has happened is a misfortune, that could not have been helped or even foreseen. Shipwreck in a storm, loss of life by unavoidable accidents, destruction of crops by drought or storm, mysterious illness the cause of which is not known, all are constantly coming to our notice, and bringing home to us their message of sadness and suffering. Then there is the misery which comes from the fact that great wealth and great poverty dwell side by side, and the wealth of the nation is not more evenly divided amongst all. This is a great problem which all the wisest and best men strive to solve.

Those who try to solve it are

generally either Socialists or Philanthropists.

(1) The Socialist looks for a solution in a re-arrangement of Society; generally he would like to make laws which would prevent anyone from becoming very rich either in money or lands, and which would bring about a more equal distribution of the wealth of a nation amongst all those belonging to it.

(2) The Philanthropist tries to do what he can to make things better by giving his money wisely to support institutions such as churches, schools, hospitals, picture galleries, societies for helping the poor, model dwelling-houses, model factories etc. We cannot to-day consider which is the better plan, probably there is room for both to work side by side. What we should notice to-day is that all these people are dissatisfied with things as they are. There have been such people in all nations and in all times, but they have behaved very differently.

One class of people is content to grumble at things as they are, and to mourn for 'the good old days' when, they say, everything was so much better. They tell us of the 'Golden Age' of the past; while for the future they see only more misery, more suffering, more hatred between man and man. This is Despair.

The other class of people says: 'Yes, things are bad now, but they are better than they were, and there is a good time coming; the clouds will soon break, and we shall see the sun shining at last. This is Hope.'

Fortunately for the world, hope is much more common than despair; and of all the nations who have hoped and thought of their Golden Age as the future the Jews are by far the most conspicuous and remarkable. Here is what some of the most remarkable of the Jews wrote about the future which they imagined and yearned for. It is taken from *Isaiah xxxv. 1—6, xi. 6, 10, lxi. 1, 2, 4.*

'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall blossom as the rose. Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; he will come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.'

'And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.'

'The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, and the desolations of many generations.'

This is a beautiful picture of what we may call the 'Golden Age,' or the kingdom of heaven; but how was it to come?

### VIII.—THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

It is a strange fact that the Jews, whose most striking characteristic as a nation was hope, were so often in circumstances which might well make the bravest hearts despair. If we look at their history we shall see that they were almost always in trouble from the oppression of the great nations which surrounded them. Their earliest history as a nation describes them in captivity in Egypt; after that there was a glorious epoch in which they conquered Canaan, and rose in prosperity, wealth, and power amongst the nations around them; but from the time of Solomon they were conquered and became subjects of Syria (twice), Assyria, Egypt (twice), Babylonia, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome.

From the death of Solomon to the birth of Christ, a period of 930 years, the Jews were free for about 200 years. For the remaining centuries they were subject to one or another of these great nations; and yet they never lost hope of national greatness. They believed that the day would come at last when Israel would be acknowledged the greatest of nations, when Jerusalem would be the capital of the world, to whom all nations would come for laws and judgment, and when their God,

Jehovah, would be known and worshipped as the only God.

The verses noticed in the previous lesson were the expression of that hope; but how was it to come about? There were different ideas; one prophet believed that it would be brought about by the chosen Jews who remained through all misfortunes faithful to Jehovah, who would give them the power to set up their nation, and who would fight for them against the strong nations around; many others hoped for a great prince, a descendant of the house and family of David, who would at last lead them to victory. It was this hope which took strongest hold upon the hearts of the people, and we constantly find the idea in their writings.

But, even then, it was difficult to see how a leader, however great he might be, would be able to gain victory over the mighty powers which held Israel in subjection so long. If we turn now to the book of *Daniel*, chapter vii., verses 9—14, we shall see the idea which was beginning to possess men's minds about the year 160 B.C., when the book was written. In this chapter the prophet speaks of the great nations as mighty beasts which destroy and devour continually all whom they can find. After these arises a fearful beast, greater, stronger, fiercer than all. By the description this is thought to be Syria. At last, says the prophet, a throne is set, and 'one that is ancient of days' takes his place upon it, surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand ser-

vants. The great beast is slain; and the kingdom of the world is given to 'one like unto a son of man.' By 'the ancient of days' surely Jehovah must be meant, by 'one like unto a son of man' the Prince of whom the prophets had spoken. The Prince is by other prophets spoken of as the Messiah, a Hebrew word meaning 'anointed.'

Note.—In this lesson, as in those immediately preceding and following, the scholars can take little part in the preparation of the lesson beyond reading over beforehand the passages which are introduced into the lesson. If it is found difficult to interest the class in this part of the subject, one has at least the consolation of knowing that in the Messianic hope of the Old Testament lies the key to a full understanding of the kingdom of heaven of the New.

#### IX.—A DREAM THAT DID NOT COME TRUE.

In the previous lessons we have seen something of what the Jews called the Kingdom of God; but was this the Kingdom of Heaven which Jesus compared to a pearl of great price, which was worth buying even at the cost of everything else? That could hardly be so. One could not buy a thing which was to come in the way which Daniel prophesied; if the Kingdom is to come in that way one can do nothing until the 'ancient of days comes.' There is much in the teaching of Jesus which seems in sympathy with this idea, and much that seems contrary to it; we shall not

understand the teaching of Jesus unless we bear in mind that he speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven in very different ways. We are accustomed to think of Heaven as another world altogether, the life after this; but there are scarcely any words of Jesus which refer to such a Heaven as that. We must remember that Jesus was a son of Jewish parents, was taught in a Jewish school, and so was brought up in the ideas and hopes of his people. This being so, we should expect to find in his teaching something that would remind us of the writings of the prophets about the Golden Age, the Prince, the Son of Man, and the great changes which were to take place before the endless kingdom was established. And in the Gospels we do find much that will remind us that Jesus was a Jew, sharing the ambitions, hopes, and ideas of the Jewish nation. For example, we may read from the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel according to Luke, the 10th and 11th and 25th to 27th verses :—

Then said he unto them, 'Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be great earthquakes, and in divers places famines and pestilences: and there shall be terrors and great signs from heaven. And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.'

There is a picture as vivid as anything in the writings of the prophets who foretold the great upheaval which should herald, and clear the way for, the Kingdom of Heaven, while the 'Son of Man coming in the clouds' is the very same phrase as we found in the book of Daniel.

Again, in *Matthew xxv. 31—46* there is a picture of the Son of Man sitting in judgment while the nations are brought before him; this is like the Old Testament idea, though here Jesus brings in one of those thoughts which raise him above all nationality; for he says that that judgment will reward the kind and charitable, and will condemn the selfish, the unkind, and the uncharitable. The old Jews would have said that only those who had remained faithful to the worship of Jehovah would be admitted to the kingdom; by his new and far nobler thought Jesus becomes more than a Jew: he becomes a leader of mankind.

It was John the Baptist who first preached that the Kingdom of Heaven was near at hand, that the great changes would take place very soon; but Jesus also took up the same teaching. To the question of the disciples as to when the kingdom should come, he replied that the exact day and hour were only known to God, but that they should keep constant watch and be always ready. He declared that it would come before that generation had passed away (*Matthew xvi. 28, Luke xxi. 32, Mark xiii. 30*). He taught them the same lesson in the parable of the Fool-

ish Virgins, who had fallen asleep and were not prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. The Kingdom was to come suddenly, unexpectedly; and if men were not prepared to receive it they would be shut out in the cold and dark and hear the stern voice saying, 'I know you not.' A further illustration may be found in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew and the 47th verse.

Such a change as the Jews expected, and as Jesus spoke of, has not taken place yet, though the generation of those who heard his words has been dead and gone these eighteen centuries. To-day most people think the idea was a mistake, and that such a change will never come; while others still expect it, and from time to time prophesy that it will be very soon. Some even profess to know the very day and hour. At first it seems hard to believe that Jesus could have made such a mistake as that; it seems to lessen our love for him as our great teacher, and to rob us of our reverence for his life and character. And yet it should not do so. Does any one reverence him less because he knew nothing of the science of air-ships, or chemistry, or evolution, or astronomy, or the way in which legends grow up about great men after their death, or the higher criticism of the Old Testament? That he shared the beliefs, and even some of the superstitions, of his time and nation was only the accident of birth and education. The value of Jesus to us does not rest upon his knowledge of the future, or his understanding of super-

stitions, or even on the power (if he had it) of performing miracles—it rests upon his life and character, which win us by their simple beauty, and upon his message of the true Kingdom of Heaven, the pearl of great price.

#### X.—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

##### (A). WHAT IT IS.

WHEN Jesus calls the Kingdom of Heaven the pearl of great price, the most precious thing in the world, he is not thinking of the Future World, or of the great changes which he, like all the Jews, expected would herald in the reign of the great Prince or Messiah—the reign of Truth, Righteousness, and Love. We have seen this in the preceding lessons; and now, when we turn to the Gospels to see what he did mean by the Kingdom of Heaven, we must be on our guard not to read those passages which plainly refer to those two things, or we shall be misled. With this precaution we shall be able to find in his own words enough to give us a clear idea of his thought of the most precious thing in the world.

If there is to be a Kingdom of Heaven, there must be subjects of the kingdom. Who are the subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven? Jesus tells us who are in it:—

(1) It is the 'righteous.' Using the imagery of the Old Testament, Jesus says that the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their

Father (*Matt.* xiii. 43). The great teachers of the Old Testament had said, ‘Righteousness tendeth to life’—that is, to real, complete, happy life (*Proverbs* xi. 19). Jesus endorses this teaching, and demands of his disciples the righteous life—upright, good, truthful, pure life, obedient to the voice of duty in the conscience. It is not sufficient, in the eyes of Jesus, to lead an ordinary, respectable life, without actually breaking any of the written laws such as the Ten Commandments; one must do this and more; one must make the inner life, of which the world knows nothing, itself good, pure, and loving. ‘Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven’ (*Matt.* v. 20). Still less is it sufficient to repeat the words of prayer and worship while the real life remains unaltered by our religion: ‘Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven’ (*Matt.* vii. 21).

## (2) The humble.

(a) The gate of Heaven is closed against the proud Pharisee, who kept the very letter of the old laws of the Jewish Church, with all its ceremonies and traditions; but in his prayers could find nothing else to say than ‘God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men’; it is open to the publican—that is, the tax-collector, whom the Jews hated and despised—

who prayed with bowed head and humble heart, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner’ (*Luke* xviii. 9—14). It is open to the greatest of sinners, who turns from his selfishness and sin and comes back, like the prodigal son, to his Father, humble and penitent.

(b) Heaven is closed against the scribes (teachers of the Jewish law) and the Pharisees, proud of their minute knowledge of the law, who declared that an oath taken upon the altar was not binding, but that he who swore by the gift that was upon the altar was bound by his oath (*Matt.* xxiii. 18). It is these men who have taken the key of knowledge, who have shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men; who enter not in themselves, neither suffer them that are entering in to enter (*Matt.* xxiii. 13). Heaven is open to the ignorant fishermen of Galilee, whose humility fits them to enter; for God reveals to babes and sucklings things which are hidden from the wise and learned (*Matt.* xi. 25).

(c) Heaven is closed against the young man, though he keeps all the commandments, whose heart is set upon his riches, proud of his position in life, and his great wealth (*Matt.* xix. 21). Heaven is open to the poor in spirit (*Matt.* v. 3). The poor would be humble, but there were few rich men in those days who were not proud of their possessions. ‘Hence,’ Jesus says, ‘it is as hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as for a camel to come into a city through

the little wicket-gate which alone is opened after nightfall.<sup>1</sup> It is not impossible for a rich man to be humble, but it is very hard. Besides, it is not likely that his heart will be set on the kingdom of heaven, for where 'his treasure is there will his heart be also.'

(3) It is they who are persecuted, who suffer for the sake of righteousness, who are hated and despised and ill-treated, because of their devotion to truth and righteousness, as all are who are not afraid to do the right, come what may (*Matt.* v. 10).

(4) It is the sincere; there is not one hypocrite in the Kingdom of Heaven.

(5) It is the 'pure in heart,' who alone can see God (*Matt.* v. 8). To the impure of heart purity, goodness, innocence, love, righteousness, unselfishness are invisible; they look through coloured spectacles, which make the purest and most beautiful things look foul and ugly. How can such be in the Kingdom of Heaven?

(6) Finally and above all perhaps, it is, as we have seen, the kind, the charitable, the loving, the peacemakers of the world. This is, after all, the great test which separates the citizens of the kingdom from all the rest. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another' (*John* xiii. 35).

Let us think of these things,—

<sup>1</sup> Probably this is the true interpretation of the words which are translated 'the eye of a needle' (*Matt.* xix. 24).

righteousness, humility, patience in suffering, sincerity, purity, and love, and we shall see how it was that Jesus said of children, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' When he set the little child in the midst of his disciples as their example, and told them to be child-like, he meant 'Be humble, be sincere, be pure in heart, be righteous, be loving, be truthful, as this child is, and the Kingdom of Heaven will be yours.'

For a moment, perhaps, it seems confusion to speak of a good man as being in the Kingdom of Heaven, and then to say that the kingdom of heaven is in that man's heart; but really this is not difficult to understand. A man who is truthful belongs to the great kingdom of the truthful, because Truth reigns in his heart, and has its kingdom there.

This, then, is the answer of Jesus to the question, 'What is the most precious thing in the world?' It is to be child-like,—loving, truthful, and obedient. But loving whom, trusting whom, obedient to whom? Jesus never hesitates here. His answer is always, 'My Father and your Father, my God and your God.' This is the most precious thing,—to know God as our Father; to love, trust, and obey Him as our Father. This is the Kingdom of Heaven,—the one Pearl of great price.

## XI.—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

### (B). WHAT IT COSTS.

AT first sight, it is hard to see how the Kingdom of Heaven could cost any-

thing; but nothing is clearer in the teaching of Jesus, than his thought of what the kingdom often costs.

(1) We have seen that Jesus calls this thing (the most precious thing in the world) sometimes the 'Kingdom of Heaven,' sometimes the 'Kingdom of God.' Often, too, he is evidently thinking of the same thing, when he speaks of life, abundant life, eternal life. This is so in that very touching story, already referred to, in which we are told of the young man who had great possessions. He had kept the commandments from his youth up, and yet felt there was something missing, the want of which prevented him from entering upon true, complete, eternal life. 'What shall I do?' he asks of Jesus. 'And Jesus looking upon him loved him,' and longed to draw him into the path of life, and make him one of the Kingdom of Heaven; but he saw that the one thing which kept him back from the kingdom was his love of money, luxury, and finery which his position allowed him to indulge. This checked the growth of love and humility in the young man's heart. It was the thorns which sprang up and choked the good seed, and so Jesus replies, 'One thing thou lackest: go sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me' (*Mark* x. 17-22). But the young man could not pay such a price as that, and the kingdom of heaven was not for him. 'His countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.' It is

this that Watts shows us in the picture, called 'For he had great possessions,' now in the Tate Gallery. Only the humble can enter the Kingdom of Heaven; often a rich man to enter the kingdom must unload like the camel which has to pass through the little wicket-gate. Often, too, love and duty demand the sacrifice of great ambitions to succeed and be prosperous, as the world counts success and prosperity. These ambitions may then be the price of the kingdom.

(2) Sometimes, however, the kingdom will cost more than money, more than the sacrifice of ambitions. Often the Christian will find that his worst enemies are 'they of his own household' (*Matt.* x. 36). This is what many of the Christian martyrs found; those whom they loved best on earth, turned against them because of the new religion they had adopted, and even gave them up to persecution and death. Still harder was it to be faithful to the Truth, when those whom they loved implored them not to be Christians for their sake. Jesus said, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me' (*Matt.* x. 37); and again, 'If any man would come after me (that is, be my disciple), let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me' (*Matt.* xvi. 24). This is the cross that the Christian may have to bear; to enter the kingdom of heaven, one may have to sacrifice the love of the dearest friends. Nothing in the teaching of Jesus gives so vivid an idea of how much the kingdom of

heaven may cost, as those words in which he warns his disciples, that to gain life one may have to give up something, the sacrifice of which will seem like plucking one's eye out, or cutting off one's right hand and casting it away.

(3) Love itself can often only be bought at a great price. To enter, and dwell in, the Kingdom of Heaven, one must not cherish a single unkind thought; anger must be cast out of the heart; thoughts of revenge upon those who wrong us must not be tolerated for a moment. 'If ye forgive men their trespasses (that is, offences against you) your heavenly Father will also forgive you' (*Matt. vi. 14*). 'Ye have heard that it was said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy: but I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust' (*Matt. v. 43*). He that has the kingdom of Heaven completely in his heart will not even resist his enemies when they strike him (*Matt. v. 38*).

(4) The pure heart, again, is one of the most costly things in the world. The class which is familiar with Tennyson's 'Holy Grail,' and surely all elder classes should be, will have an illustration close at hand in the story of the struggle of Lancelot for the pure heart to which alone are revealed the glories of heaven.

(5) Righteousness—character—good-

ness—good conscience—what a price has to be paid for these, what constant struggle against temptation! Wealth, wisdom, liberty, justice,—these things seem cheap, compared with the Kingdom of Heaven.

## XII.—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

### (c). ITS PRECIOUSNESS.

INDEED when one considers the price that must be paid for the kingdom of heaven, one cannot help despairing of ever being able to buy it. It seems a pearl whose price is far beyond our means; so that if Jesus had said no more about the kingdom than we have considered in the previous lessons, he must have left his disciples utterly hopeless. His teaching is, on the contrary, full of hope. In his dealings with the men and women about him he showed that he did not despair of anyone; everyone might enter the kingdom of heaven, might become a son of God. Once more it is by a parable that he explains how this can be:

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened' (*Matt. xiii. 31—34*).

Love, trust, obedience to the will of God, humility, purity, sincerity—there

is not one of us who has not something of each of these things in his heart. ‘The kingdom is God is within you’ (*Luke xvii. 21*), not in its perfection, not fully developed, but as a tiny seed that may become a mighty tree if we will but let it grow. When these things reign supreme in our hearts, then the kingdom of heaven will be perfect in us, and the pearl of great price will be ours. But what of the price? The price must be paid, very seldom in a great sum, though sometimes a great sacrifice is demanded, far more often in little sums; for, as we have seen, if these things are to grow in our hearts we must constantly make little sacrifices for their sake. But is the kingdom of heaven so precious as to be worth so great a price?

I believe no one can read the Gospels with an open and unprejudiced mind and fail to come to the conclusion that Jesus, in whom alone the kingdom of heaven dwelt in perfection, had proved for himself that the kingdom of heaven was the pearl of great price, that the sense of harmony with the will of God was the most precious thing in the world. The man to whom we owe the Lord’s Prayer, and the Beatitudes, and indeed the whole Sermon on the Mount, and the choicest of the Parables—the man who could say ‘Father, thy will not mine be done,’ and again ‘I and my Father are one’—knew an inward joy and peace compared with which what we call pleasure seems like so much dross. Christianity has for many centuries dwelt only on the sad side of

Christ’s life; men loved to dilate more and more upon the bitter sufferings of Jesus, his disappointment, his loneliness, and his terrible and degraded death. Such a view is only one-sided. Let us not for a moment underestimate the great sacrifice which Jesus made for the sake of truth, true religion, and his Gospel of the Fatherhood of God, or the terrible struggle which it cost him to make that sacrifice; but neither let us be blind to the happiness of Jesus. Jesus sitting amongst his disciples, resting awhile at the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, walking through the corn-fields, blessing little children, finding in the simplest things—flowers, birds, trees, seeds, the games of children, the leaven of the housewife, the tender care of the shepherd—messages of God and his love, is surely the very picture of one who has found the most precious thing in the world, and tastes every hour the joys which it brings to him. To him the kingdom of heaven is like a marriage-feast where all is light, love, and joy; not to have the kingdom in one’s heart is to him like being ‘in the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth’ (*Matt. xxii. 1–14; xxv. 1–13*).

It is the same spirit of gladness which breathes in those splendid words of St. Paul which are quoted at the end of Lesson IV.; it was the same spirit which strengthened and supported the ‘noble army of martyrs’ who gave up life rather than the in-

ward peace which is the fruit of a good conscience.

' Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage ;  
Minds innocent and quiet take  
That for a hermitage.'

So sings the poet Lovelace; while Madame Guion, imprisoned in the castle of Vincennes, reaches a far nobler height when she says: ' My heart was full of that joy which God gives to all that love Him, in the midst of their greatest crosses.

' A little bird I am,  
Shut from the fields of air,  
And in my songs I sit and sing  
To Him who placed me there ;  
Well pleased a prisoner to be,  
Because, my God, it pleaseth Thee ! '

It is the same thought which inspires the most beautiful hymns we have, from the 23rd Psalm to this of Sarah J. Williams:—

' Quiet from God ! how beautiful to keep  
This treasure the All-merciful hath given;  
To feel, when we awake and when we sleep,  
Its incense round us like a breath from  
Heaven.

' To sojourn in the world, and yet apart ;  
To dwell with God, and still with man to  
feel ;  
To bear about for ever in the heart  
The gladness which His Spirit doth  
reveal !

' What shall make trouble, then ? '

*Essex Hall Hymnal, 161.*

But after all, why should we go to the lives of others for proofs of the preciousness of the kingdom of heaven, when we have in our own life the best proof we can desire ?

For it is the experience of all of us that in proportion as Love, Trust, Purity, Humility, and Righteousness have grown up in our hearts, so have we found real, lasting joy. It is this joy, the fruit of 'the peace of God which passeth understanding,' which makes the kingdom of heaven the one pearl of great price, the most precious thing in the world.

F. TALBOT.

#### 'OLE DADDY DO-FUNNY.'

The following is supposed to be a dialogue between an old negro and the little children of his white master :—

' Ole Daddy Do-funny,  
How you come on ?'  
' Porly dis morn, honey,  
Porly dis morn.

My ole spine it's sort of stiff,  
An' my arms dey 'fuse to lif',  
And de mizry's in my breas',  
An' I got the heart-distress,  
And de growing pains dey lingers  
In my knee-j'nts and my fingers ;  
But I'm well, praise God, dis mornin.'

' Ole Daddy Do-funny,  
What cuyus talk ?  
How is you well,  
When you can't even walk ?'  
' Hush, you foolish chillen, hush !  
What's dat singing in de brush ?  
Ain't dat yonder blue de sky ?  
Feel de cool breeze passin' by !  
Dis ole painful back an' knee,  
Laws-a-mussy, dey ain't me,  
An' I'm well, praise God, dis mornin ! '

RUTH McENERY STUART.

## Work and Prayer.

A PARABLE.

**A**LITTLE seed was planted deep down in the rich soil, and lay there, quiet, ignorant, and useless for a little while. By and by a strange change came over it—a craving for it hardly knew what—a sense of being drawn by something it could not yet see. Under the influence of this change, the life that lay hidden in the heart of it began to work, and soon two tiny shoots sprang forth—one striking down into the soil drinking up the moisture and finding food, and the other turning upwards seeking this unknown something it wanted so much. It was hard work for the poor tender little shoot, piercing through that dark, heavy soil, pushing past stones and cleaving through clods. Many a time it might have given up in despair, only the other shoot was at work strengthening its heart and giving it energy. So it strove on, day by day; hour by hour, wondering whether after all there was anything beyond that hard, dark burden of earth, whether there was really anything calling it up, as it had imagined—up to an unknown life, not yet found. It struggled on, however, and the time came when it found its reward. In the dark night it had forced its little shoot beyond the last stone, through the last layer of earth, and as morning broke it saw—oh, wonderful! oh, beautiful! oh, rapture! LIGHT, at last!!

The golden sun shone down benignantly on it, and its little heart was content and joyful. No more doubt, no more sorrow, no more fear. It saw now, what it had only reached after dimly before. Its root struck down with more eager might to gather strength from Mother Earth. Its shoot sprang up, and put out its leaves, then its buds, its blossoms, its ripe fruit, and all the while it rejoiced in the Light that had drawn it into activity. True, at night time it seemed for a while to be left lonely, but it soon found that morning broke again, brightly and surely, and it was content to believe when it could not see, and to watch and wait for the new day-spring from on high. So, when the sun shines, the seeds are drawn upwards until they find the light.

Child! you are the seed, with the life in you waiting to spring into action. The Sun of Righteousness, the loving Father who planted you in the rich soil of this world, for ever shines in love and power. He is drawing you and all others to Himself. When a sense of reverence comes over you, when a restless longing for you hardly know what makes you eager, you know not why, God is stirring the pure life in you to action. Strike your root of duty, of obedience, of work, down, gathering strength by daily faithfulness; strike your best aspirations upwards, seeking after the light beyond, and soon—you know not how soon—you will come into the glad sunshine of religion. By work gain

strength; by prayer seek light. Be not weary; and soon you will issue from darkness, and learn to love the Father of Lights. Then, if at times, night settles down, and you seem left alone once more in the gloom, faith will remind you that day will soon break again, and you will rest in peace.

H. W. HAWKES.

#### THE BULLFINCH & THE SKYLARK.

A BULLFINCH whistled in his waistcoat red,  
He piped as he plumed his wing,  
'A very handsome bird I am!' he said,  
    Heigh ho! the sunny spring!

A Skylark lighted on a sorrel stalk,  
Just where the wild bees hum,  
'Oh Skylark,' said the Bullfinch, 'can't  
you talk?'  
    Heigh ho: the summer's come!

'Seespeckle-coat, why don't you pipe like me?  
You could if you liked,' he said,  
'Why perch on a stalk instead of on a tree?  
    Heigh ho! the summer's fled!

The Skylark hovered on her outspread wing,  
Light as the thistledown;  
'Oh Bullfinch, I may never hope like you  
to sing.'  
    Heigh ho! the leaves are brown!

'I do not know if it be right or wrong,  
Each must his gift unfold,  
But all I can pour into my song.'  
    Heigh ho! the year grows old!

She flew up high, a tiny speck of black,  
Lost in the infinite blue,  
A wealth of melody came floating back,  
    Heigh ho! hope springs a-new!

And one who heard it, said 'To some 'tis  
given  
To pipe, and some to mourn,  
And songs like hers lift up our souls to  
heaven,  
    On gladsome wings up-borne!

I. M. R.

#### The Child's View of the Sunday School Teacher.

O you like Mr. Holmes?' I once asked a little girl, about her Sunday-school Teacher.

'Like him?' she said. 'No! Why, I love him!'

Subsequently, a similar question was put about the same teacher to one of his young male scholars.

'Mr. Holmes?' was the reply. 'Oh, he's all right; but when is Mr. Coote coming back?'

On a third occasion, I was sitting with his class, when Mr. Holmes came in and passed along the room, while one of the boys eyed him scornfully.

'Thinks himself a Solomon, he does!', the boy muttered.

Circumstances seemed to call for an expostulation, and I gave it.

'Oh, yes! I know all about that,' the boy interrupted. 'Of course, you'd have to say that; but yer can't deny it, can yer?' And the unfortunate thing was that I could not.

For either of the three attitudes, worship, indifference, or condemnation, were possible and just in regard to Mr. Holmes, and are more possible and just than we care to admit, towards us all.

The child's view of the Sunday-school teacher, it may truthfully be said, depends on the child and the teacher. Children there are who can love scarce anyone; some, on the con-

trary, can say sincerely with a little friend of mine, 'I love everybody!' There are teachers who attract unfailingly by natural sweetness; teachers there are whom it is difficult, indeed, to love. It is, nevertheless, possible for us to construct from the thousand attributes of childhood and the hundred characteristics of teachers, representative figures, from whom we may see more clearly what we are in the children's eyes, and thus be enabled to do our work with a better apprehension of what our work should be.

Let us forget our present state, and bring out from the storehouse of past events the days when everything was bright and new and wonderful,—when the sun shone brighter than it seems to shine to-day; when winds were colder, and rain something more than a topic of polite conversation; when the voice of Nature called to us, and found us answer gladly, and woods and skies and birds and flowers held a charm which now they have lost. The grown-up people were envied then, and I stoutly maintain were rightly envied, for their wider view of the world and the Heaven beyond the world should bring them a greater gladness. They were envied in those days, and admired as people who had attained and *knew*; had attained to a position that we watched with longing eyes, doubtful whether we should ever gain it, and had read and read again, and knew whole pages in the book of life, that were hidden mysteries to us.

That primarily was how we regarded

our Sunday-school teacher. We 'darkly knew him great and wise,' and his words to us had all the vast importance of first impressions. When an emotion has taken its place in a child's heart, only a stronger emotion can remove it, as Spinoza has happily stated. Set before a grown but untaught man, the two statements, 'Vice is pleasant,' 'Virtue is right,' and he may act upon either; but probably chooses the first. Take that man in his earliest years, before strong temptation has come to him; implant the love of virtue, and vice, to dislodge the other, must have a greater strength.

How childish fancy plays around unexplored places! The child may have free entry of a hundred beautiful gardens; but there is one gate which stands inexorably locked, an impassable barrier, showing through its open bars the beginnings of an avenue deep-toned with stately trees. The song of a bird comes to him, suddenly breaking the silence, and the child's face is pressed against the gate as he tries to make out the nest. Flowers he can see of tantalizing beauty. A squirrel darts along the path. Soon the avenue winds, and all the rest is shut from view, as one line of trees seems to touch the other. But the child outside the gate is busy conjuring pictures. All the beauty of his hundred gardens he reads into this one, adds to that a hundred times, and still feels that beyond the turn in the path there is something better yet. And often he comes back, and stands at the gate and watches; and he

dreams of the garden at night. At last, comes someone to him who has been within the garden, and from the pictures drawn by that one the child paints other pictures, where all the colours are intensified, and the shadows deepened to darkness, the flowers increased to an impossible height, and the birds in his childish vision are such as never were on land or sea. All the world to our younger children is a garden whose gates are shut, and the teacher is one who has walked within it. Too seldom does the teacher think how his pictures are being examined with an eagerness that would bring envy to an Academy exhibitor. He paints easily, indifferently, and every detail is copied on to another canvas, and exaggerated by a little painter whose work is all impressionist; and the general tone of the teacher's picture takes its place for ever in the impressionist copyist's mind, and can be dimly traced in every picture drawn by the child throughout his life. I am told there are teachers who are careless about their work, who think their mistakes do not matter. Careless? when it is theirs to give colour and form to lives which can be powerful for God or can be wasted, according as those do their work well or badly who have it in their power to give those first impressions whose character is never forgotten! Of such teachers I cannot speak, for I do not understand them.

But many children have received impressions from the world before they come into the hands of a Sunday-school

teacher, and these act variously. 'If I am good, I shall go to Heaven; if I am bad, I shall be sent to Hell,' was the first sentence in an essay written at my request by a little girl who had been in a Unitarian school for eighteen months, having come from another denomination. It was again a case of first impressions. She had an admirable Unitarian teacher, who had been powerless, however, to remove entirely an idea that had probably been repeated by baby lips after another teacher. 'But I believe it's all rot about God!' a boy objected, who had come into the class at the age of ten, after running wild. 'I'm better off than a lot of good boys. You can't gammon me!'

In a hundred ways, of which these two are instances, the Sunday-school teacher is a hostile being. He has to speak truths which are unpleasant; being unpleasant, the truths are rejected; the teacher, next Sunday, repeats them; if he be unwise, repeats them in practically the same form, and this time the child does not listen. Only by descending from his seat of the mighty, by trying to gain that knowledge which is sympathy, can the teacher gain his end.

When I look round for the reason why so much good teaching has so little effect, I find it here. The teacher has overdrawn the credit allowed him by his scholars: even the boy who comes into the school rowdy from a free and easy world, regards his teacher with a part of that respect which is given

freely by the child who has been caught young ; but when the teacher goes on his even way regardless of the temperament of his class, knows his lesson to be good, and becomes angry if it be not accepted, he makes failure inevitable by forgetting that even an academically perfect lesson has to be delivered to imperfect children, and that his first duty is to come into close sympathy with his scholars. Only by studying them can he attain success. Indeed, it may be said that one of the first duties of a teacher is to know when not to teach. He himself for the time must be a child, with experience and wisdom added. I do not suggest that his talk should be of marbles and hopscotch, though I have known an admirable lesson given on one of these subjects ; but children warm at the sight of love, and love must have perfect understanding, which is quite impossible if attempted from afar.

With all this, it must carefully be kept in mind that a child's powers are limited and his perceptions probably dim, so that often the teacher's words are incomprehensible ; or he takes into his little mind only the unimportant parts of a lesson. In the far-off days, when I thought that I could teach, I once devoted anxious thought to an address which was to revolutionize the lives of all my infant hearers. To make it acceptable, I coated it with what I was pleased to call humour, but was conscious during the lightest joke of the grim set purpose behind. The address was received with every

mark of approval, and on the next Sunday, when I overtook one of the girls—on her way to school, I gave myself up to delighted hearing as she spoke of it at once. ‘And I can remember such a lot of it,’ she said presently. ‘Really?’ I said, ‘Now, what can you remember?’ She smiled, and readily repeated one of the jokes. ‘Do you remember anything else?’ I queried, not so sure that this was pleasant. ‘Oh, yes!’ she said, and repeated another joke. Again I asked, and again a joke was repeated. ‘But wasn't there any lesson?’ I inquired, in some dismay. ‘Oh, no!’ she replied with conviction. ‘No, there wasn't any lesson! ’

Since then I have made greater allowances for the disposition of my hearers, and can speak with special feeling, when I recommend that plan to others. No lesson can have full effect which is not the result of full understanding of those who listen to it. Perfect sympathy must exist before good teaching can be given.

And the last of the child's four main views is to some of us the most terrible. The teacher is essentially someone to be weighed and examined. No judges of character, it is declared, are so keen and perceptive as children. Character is often shown plainly in little things ; but older examiners do not look for these, as does the child by whom only the little things are understood. But the teacher, at first, is favourably placed. Whether he lives righteously or not, during the lesson

he has to speak of righteous living, and the child, who has probably some infantile wrong-doing somewhere at the back of his memory, comes to look upon his teacher as a pattern and a judge. 'If my teacher says this, of course, my teacher does it,' is the unperceived reasoning in the mind of the little wrong-doer. So the teacher is watched to show the way by action, and—Well, how many of us are there who unfailingly live up to our Sunday-school lessons? Perhaps there has been a lesson on kindness, and watching his new pattern of kindness, the child sees someone irritably rebuked, unjustly. Another teacher, or a superintendent, would think nothing of the incident, or consider the teacher right; but the child puzzles over it for days, and thinks the teacher wrong, and is greatly perplexed and more than a little disappointed, and his new purpose wavers. Every time he comes to school, the child, though he does not know it, is at a parting of the ways. Influences which are not wholly good have been leaving his trustful steps, and a new influence comes to him each Sunday; and when he finds that he who could mightily exert that influence does not follow it himself, is it, I ask, surprising if the child, too, walks in other ways?

What a sacred, momentous, all-important business our teaching is! When we think how lives are being shaped by our words and our actions, by the least words and the least actions most, when we remember that

every thought taken into our minds comes out in our lives soon or late, that we are being minutely watched by those who would do right if we would, we should fling carelessness and error from us by the power of the solemn words, 'Who causeth one of my little ones to stumble.'

I suppose this is not a controversial question; but if my readers and I were to divide on the point, who is the more to be considered, the teacher or the child—if, unanimously, they answered 'the teacher,' and I alone said 'the child,' I should enter upon the discussion then with full confidence in the words, 'Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just.'

Why, by the very fact of his becoming a teacher, a man admits that the child has to be considered first. The good of the child is our end; the words of the teacher only a means. But beyond that, the teacher has received the ministrations of teachers himself; while, poor children, some of them have little enough in their lives that makes for good. Too many have unwise, careless, unloving parents; the child very likely is only sent to school because the parents want to get him out of their sight; to the day-school teacher he is only one of a hundred; his infant friends have little of good in their influence, and when he comes into our Sunday schools he is far too often blamed if he kicks his feet against a chair; not blamed in wholesome discipline, but blamed and lectured in hasty, unreasonable anger. As a Sun-

day-school superintendent, I may be told I should take the teacher's part in the complaints he makes. I admit it may be unregenerate of me, but as I listen to tales of infant wrong-doing, I think that the teacher is condemning not the child, but himself; and I wish I could make him join in the prayer, 'Oh, God, may we come to love these little crippled souls whom Thou hast given into our charge.'

Love is the power that makes a child's world bright. Love is the power that can make a child's life good. I look around my Sunday school and in the children see many faults; but I look into my heart, and there I find them all. As we ourselves can only hope, not for relentless justice, but for tenderness and love in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and we stand alone before our Maker; so we must be moved to pray that all our dealings with our children may be inspired by tenderness and love.

In solemn truth, ours is a noble mission, and there is no joy so great as that which can come to us. Who shall set a limit on the influence of a noble life? Far to right and left it spreads to our brothers in the conflict, bidding them be of good courage; back to the old and wounded warrior with cheering message that the fight for the truth goes on; forward to the young ones watching us, showing them that the cause is noble; and forward yet, beyond the human horizon to the millions yet unborn, who will be moved through

those whom we have influenced, to take their place in the field and eagerly live for God; so that, when we too are old and wounded, we shall hear from afar the clash of arms, and, dying, shall know we have fought the good fight, and brought nearer the day of triumph. Only to have attempted! Ah! but to have achieved!

And the spirit of our work is higher yet. There is in it nothing selfish. Not for us is the sound of cheering multitudes; not for us is the wish for that. It is ours, unacclaimed, to work, not for fame, but for God; and when we rest at last, of our part only to say, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the glory for ever'

W. H. HOWE.

#### LIGHT AND TWILIGHT.

In the Horizon's crimson glow,  
Sinks the sun's wide-raying wheel,  
And the worlds it could not show,  
Leaves the twilight to reveal.

'Neath the canopy of blue  
Thoughts are kept to earth alone,  
Heavenly forms are held from view—  
Only in the twilight shown.

Though the mind and heart be one,  
Each reveals its light apart;  
When the reason's course is run  
Comes the twilight of the heart.

When from out the heart had gone  
All the light of reason's sun,  
Myriad worlds of light there shone—  
Myriads in the place of one.

E. L. H. T.

## The Bible.

### I. WHAT IS A BIBLE?



**N**the story of the temptation of Jesus, in which the wicked thoughts which Jesus had to overcome are spoken of as if they had been whispered to him by an evil spirit, you will find these words:—‘Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the wing of the temple, and saith unto him, if thou art the son of God, cast thyself down: for *it is written*, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.’ Jesus said unto him, again *it is written*, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’

Notice the little phrase, *it is written*, which both the tempter and Jesus himself are said to have used. It is evidently a very important phrase, for the speakers seem to rely on it as an argument. What they are going to quote, they seem to say, must be believed or obeyed, because *it is written*.

What is it, then, that they quote? The first is a passage from one of the Psalms, and the second comes from the book of Deuteronomy. They are texts of scripture, taken from the Hebrew Bible, which is now (as the Old Testament) a part of our Christian Bible. Now is it not a curious thing that these three words, *text*, *scripture*, and *Bible* all mean very much the same thing,

*that which is written?* Scripture comes from a Latin word which has that precise meaning. *Text* means, in Latin, a scroll of stuff covered with writing. *Bible* comes from a Greek word which meant, first of all, a sort of vegetable parchment used for writing, and then came to mean any sort of *written* page or book.

There are many Christians who still use the quaint old phrase, ‘it is written’ whenever they quote from the Bible, and only a few of them, perhaps, ever think that in many different parts of the world millions of people who are not Christians are using the same formula, in many different languages, as they quote from many different Bibles. When a Mohammedan says, in Arabic, ‘it is written,’ he is about to recite words from the Koran, which is the Mohammedan Bible. Its name does not mean exactly ‘what is written,’ but contains the same idea, for it means ‘what is read.’ To a Parsee ‘it is written’ means that it is to be found in the Avesta; that is the name of his Bible, and it means, in the old Persian language, just what ‘scripture’ meant in Latin. So too the Chinese who follow the Confucian religion call their sacred books ‘King,’ a word which has the same original meaning as ‘text.’

All these different people, then, in their different languages and religions, speak about their various Bibles in very much the same words in which we speak about ours; and that would lead us to suppose that their feeling towards

their own Bible is very like that which we Christians have towards our Bible. And so indeed it is. An ignorant and superstitious man, whether he is a follower of Jesus, of the Buddha, of Zoroaster or of Mohammed, thinks that his own Bible, and no other Bible, is a miraculous book, true in every word and full of divine revelation. The wiser folk know that this is not so; they know that their own Bible is not a miraculously perfect book, and that other Bibles besides their own contain precious truth about God and man; but still they naturally love their own Bible, which speaks to them in the words of their own religion, best of all. Some of the chief Bibles of the world contain writings much more ancient than any part of ours; for instance the Vedic hymns of the Hindu religion, which are more than three thousand years old. All the great Bibles, except the Koran, are older than our New Testament. Some of them are much larger than our Bible; the Buddhist Bible is five or six times as large. And though there is not one of them which can be compared with ours in real value,—none that contains such splendid poetry, such deep wisdom, such religious light,—yet they all contain a precious store of poetry and wisdom, and all can be found helpful by a religious spirit.

How did these great Bibles come into being? With one exception they all grew up in the same way, taking many centuries to grow. The one exception is the Koran, which was all put

together by Mohammed; but even that was very largely made up of extracts from ancient books, such as the Old Testament and the Jewish commentaries on it, and of traditional stories, which had been told by father to son for many generations. All the other Bibles, whether written in Sanskrit, Zend or Hebrew, whether in India, Persia, China or Palestine, have had the same kind of history. The beginning of each of them was some ancient book of religion; it might be a history of God's dealings with the patriarchs, or a code of law, written at a time when law and religion were one, or a collection of temple hymns. In very ancient days, when there were but few books, and every one had to be copied out by hand on costly skins, every book was cherished as a precious thing, and a book of religion would be valued even more than the rest for the sake of its contents. Then, in a few generations, when nobody knew when or by whom the book had been written, it was looked upon as not only precious but also mysterious; and men began to say about it, as they used to say of every great work, even a building, whose origin was forgotten, that it could not be the work of man; only a God could have been its author. So the book began to be reverenced, as something sacred. Then, as years rolled on, the same thing would happen to other books, too. Every book about religion which 'lived,' as we say, for a few generations, would begin to share the same kind of reverence, for just the

same reason, which had befallen the first of the series. In this way, for instance, first the Vedic hymns, then the earliest commentaries on them, then later commentaries on the earliest commentaries, came to be revered as sacred scripture. So each of the great Bibles grew, little by little, like a rolling snowball. And this process went on for many centuries. You might even ask, why should it ever come to an end? The chief means by which it has been brought to an end is this; all languages gradually change, until they become in the end quite different from what they used to be, and the old writings can only be read by learned men who study the ancient tongue. Sometimes, by a great invasion and conquest, a language is practically destroyed. Then nothing more can be written in the old language, the language of the scriptures, and it is looked upon after a time as itself sacred. We talk, for instance, about 'the sacred tongue,' meaning Hebrew, because most of our Bible is written in Hebrew. It is generally in this way, by the wearing out of a language, that the growth of a Bible is stopped.

A Bible, then, is nearly always *a collection of religious books of very different age*. That is the case with our Bible also. We say 'the Bible is' this or that, but we ought strictly to say 'the Bible are'; for the Greek word which we have changed into 'Bible' is really plural; it means 'the books.' In the next lesson we shall begin to speak about the 'books,' and

shew how they gradually came one after another, to be regarded as sacred scripture.

## II. THE SIX-BOOK.

Men who study rocks tell us that the crust of the earth is made up of many different sorts of material, arranged for the most part in layers, which they call 'strata.' The lowest of these strata are the oldest; but none of them, not even the oldest, can claim to be called the first, original rock; all have been made, by the action of air, water, and fire, out of rocks that existed earlier. Sometimes two or more different strata are melted or crushed together, so that they form only one stratum. Some strata contain what are called 'pockets,' loose patches of another sort of rock, such as gravel in clay; and some contain 'boulders,' fragments of hard stone which have embedded themselves in a softer material.

Something very like this is true, as we have seen, about our Bible as a whole; but it applies most especially to the oldest part of the Old Testament, the Hexateuch, or 'Six-book,' which contains Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and the Book of Joshua. We may say about this Hexateuch that it is *stratified*, some of the strata being much older than others; that certain of its strata are what the geologists call *metamorphic*, being made up of fragments of earlier strata, mixed and fused

together; and that these strata contain *pockets*, or long quotations from older literature, especially codes of law, and *boulders*, the most precious of which are ancient songs of victory and hymns of worship.

But you must not suppose that the six books into which we now divide the 'Six-book,' and after which we name it (Genesis, Exodus, etc.), are the strata about which I have been speaking. These names and divisions were not used until long after the Six-book had been completed, and they have nothing to do with the history of its growth. The strata that I mean, the writings of different age out of which the Six-book was gradually built up, have no proper names. Learned men who are very familiar with them always allude to them by initials, such as JE, or P, or D<sup>2</sup>.

The essays in which these learned men write about them are called 'The Higher Criticism,' and are very terrifying to read, because they consist chiefly of capital letters, abbreviations, and bits of Hebrew, so that they look like a Jewish edition of Euclid. But when, by the exercise of great courage, we find out what they mean, it turns out to be quite simple and rather interesting.

Somewhere about two thousand seven hundred years ago a Jew who lived in or near Jerusalem wrote a history of his own nation, and of its ancestors from the beginning of the world. The earth at first, he tells us, was dry and barren; but Yahweh, the god, caused

a mist to rise and moisten it, so that trees and plants could grow. Then he made a man, and planted the garden of Eden for him to live in, and to provide the man with companions. Yahweh made every kind of bird and beast, and last of all he made woman. (You will not find the name *Yahweh* in your English Bible, but you can always tell where it comes in the Hebrew, because in those places our translation has the word 'lord' in capital letters, thus: LORD.) The old Jewish writer went on to describe how the serpent tempted Eve, and led both the woman and her husband to sin; how they were driven from the garden; how Cain killed Abel; how men increased on the face of the earth, and became very wicked, so that Yahweh grew sorry that he had made them, and decided to destroy them with a great flood. Then he describes Noah's ark, and how the world was peopled a second time; the building of the tower of Babel; and so passes on to the call of Abram, and the history of the chosen people.

A great deal, probably, of what was contained in this old writer's book had never been written down before. It is full of strange and interesting tales, such as are often kept alive by word of mouth alone for hundreds of years. If you would like to see how well he could tell those stories, read chapter xliv. in Genesis. The blessing which Jacob gave to his sons on his deathbed (Gen. xlix. 1-28, *from* 'and he said, Gather yourselves,' *to* 'this is it

that their father spake to them') is a 'boulder' in this stratum,—an old poem which the writer did not compose, but copied out. The work of this Jewish writer, who told about Yahweh and his chosen people, is what the learned men call J.

About the same time, but perhaps a little later, another writer set to work in the same way to write the history of Abraham and his descendants. This second historian was not, strictly speaking, a Jew. He did not belong to the kingdom of Judah, of which Jerusalem was the capital, and the king was of the house of David. He was a subject of the king of Israel, who ruled in Samaria. And so, although he was of the same race and the same religion as the Jewish writer, he did not speak quite the same kind of Hebrew, or look at history from quite the same point of view. Neither the written works nor the traditional stories which he knew were quite the same as those that circulated in the kingdom of Judah; and even when the same story was told by father to son in both kingdoms, it was not told in quite the same way. For instance, the story of Joseph, as it came down to this writer, was slightly different from the version of it which the Jewish writer knew. The two histories resembled each other in great matters, and differed in small matters, very much like two histories of Great Britain, one written by an Englishman and the other by a Scotchman. The Israelite could tell his story very

simply and well, as you may see in Gen. xli., nearly all of which is his (*except*, ver. 14, 'and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon,' and the whole of ver. 46). An important 'pocket' in this stratum is the 'Book of the Covenant' (Ex. xx. 20-xxiii.); and a precious 'boulder' is the Song of Moses in Ex. xv. Learned men speak of this Israelite's work by the letter E.

There were then two separate histories of the children of Israel, who worshipped Yahweh, the god of righteousness, and considered themselves his chosen people. After a time they both fell into the hands of a learned scribe, who thought it a pity that they were two books, and not one. He saw that each had its special merits, that on some topics and in some parts of the history each was better than the other, and so he set to work to put them together into one book, which should combine the merits of both. He worked, as we should say now, mainly with scissors and paste: he wrote as little as possible himself, but made up his book by copying out passages, long and short, from J and E. Where they told the same story, he either chose one version and left out the other, or else he tried to work the two versions together, putting first a little bit of one and then a little bit of the other. For instance, in Gen. xxxvii, the scribe has shifted over from one source to the other,—from J to E or from E to J,—no less than eight times. The result of this way of working is sometimes not at all clear. Sometimes we find

the same thing told twice over, and sometimes the verses from the different sources seem to contradict one another. But the scribe probably kept in his one book everything of real value which he found in either of its two parent-books. Learned men call the scribe C, and his book JE.

The children of Israel were, as you know, carried away into exile; and at that sad time, between five and six hundred years before Christ, another writer, a priest, set to work to give a continuous account of the early history of the world and of his own people. He took a great interest in genealogies, as well as in that ceremonial law with which his professional duty was concerned. He wrote more like a modern historian than the others, for he did not quote old documents as they stood, but gave the substance of them in his own language; but he has preserved for us one very valuable old law-code, the 'Law of Holiness,' Lev. xvii.-xxvi. This priestly historian (who is called P by the learned men) tells us no childish stories of God walking and talking like a man, or acting on sudden impulses of anger or remorse, like the writer of J. He has a very lofty idea of God's majesty, and writes in a noble style.

In II. Kings xxii. you can read about a mysterious 'book of the law' which was 'found' by Hilkiah the priest. If there is no mistake, and Hilkiah really found this book, at least it had not been lost long, for it is written in the Hebrew of that time: its language is very like that of the prophet

Jeremiah, who lived then or a little later. This book is full of moral exhortations, mixed with promises and threats, which it tells us were given to the Israelites by God through Moses, not, like the older law, on Mount Sinai, but towards the end of their wanderings, as they drew near to the promised land. The writer was acquainted with JE, the one book which C had made out of two; and sometimes quotes from it. Learned men call this 'book of the law' D, because it is embodied in our book of Deuteronomy.

At last the exiles returned, and built their temple again, and after many hardships were saved and restored to the old ways by Ezra and Nehemiah. These 'Jews of the return' believed that the trouble which had befallen their nation was a judgment on their forefathers for neglecting God's law. They were themselves most anxious to keep that law; but, when they asked where it was written, they found that there was no single book containing the whole of it,—some of it was in JE, some in P, some in D, some in other and shorter works. To meet their need some pious scribe (the Jews say that it was Ezra himself; learned men, who are not sure of that, call this scribe 'the Redactor,' or R) took all these works and made one book of them, just as C had made one book of J and E. He worked in much the same way, writing very little himself, but piecing together passages from his different sources. The result, in this case too, is not without repetitions and

contradictions. For instance, he gave first the grand account of Creation from P, Gen. i. 1-ii. 4, and then added the different account from JE, which had originally been written by J, ii. 4-25. In the story of the Flood he worked together pieces of P and JE, just as C had worked together pieces of J and E in the story of Joseph. His work is not perfect; but it is one of the most wonderful books ever composed, for it is the Six-book, the sacred Law of the Jews, the beginning of our magnificent Bible.

### III.—THE LAW, THE PROPHETS AND THE SCRIPTURES.

We have seen that the Hexateuch, or ‘Six-book,’ was put together about the time of Ezra: if you would like a date, you can say about the year 444 B.C.

But some of you, perhaps, never heard of the Hexateuch before, though you have heard of the Pentateuch (or ‘Five-book’), sometimes called ‘The five-books of Moses.’ How is that?

The explanation is very simple. Soon after the Six-book was composed it was divided, for convenience, into six great sections,—Genesis, Exodus and so on. The Jews venerated the whole work because it contained the written law of Yahweh, and the life of the great prophet Moses, through whom they believed that the law had been given. But they soon began to notice that only five of the six sections dealt with these themes: the sixth

did not contain any part of the law, and only recorded events that had happened after Moses’ death. So they began to call those five books the ‘Torah’ or ‘Law,’ and, while they looked on the book of Joshua as a sacred book, they did not count it part of the Torah.

You may remember that Jesus, after giving the two great commandments, says that on these two commandments, all ‘the Law and the Prophets’ depend. In other places, too, he speaks about the Bible of his day in the same phrase, ‘the Law and the Prophets.’ We have seen what the Law was, and how it grew into being; what were ‘the Prophets’?

If we look at a Hebrew Bible we shall see that the first book among ‘the Prophets’ is the book of Joshua. That gives us a clue. Joshua was a book which belonged to the earliest Bible, and was revered as sacred, but did not belong to the Law. Now at the time when that Bible (the six-book) was put together there were other ancient books on sacred history, besides JE, D, P and the rest that were included in it. There was, for instance, the book of Judges, which had been written before D was found, and had afterwards been revised. It was originally a putting together of two short books about the wars and heroes of the separate tribes of Israel, before they had joined into a nation under a King. There was also a book which had been made up of three different short histories of Israel, from the time of

Samuel to the death of David, giving the story of the foundation of the Kingdom. This stands in our Bible, in a revised form, as I. Sam. i.—I. K. ii. Then there was a history of Solomon, and added to it a history of the divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah; these, with some additions and revisions, make up the main part of our books of Kings.

These historical books are called by the Jews 'the former Prophets': but when we speak of 'the prophets' we mean the men whose books are called by the Jews 'the latter Prophets.' These are partly historical also, and in a very valuable kind, for they give the history of those very times in which the writers lived. But it is not for their history that we prize them most. Some of them are full of the noblest teaching of righteousness; of the sublimest faith and hope in God; of the grandest poetry. We can see in them, gradually growing up, a pure conception of God and duty which prepared the way for that greatest of the Prophets, Jesus Christ. We can also see in some of them, alas, the beginning of that narrow formalism which characterised the Scribes and Pharisees who rejected Jesus and slew him.

If we put aside these prophets whose date is uncertain, the earliest is the Jewish shepherd *Amos*, who prophesied in the Northern Kingdom during the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II. (780 B.C.). Wealth abounded and outward forms of worship flourished, but Amos denounces the oppression of the poor

and the failure of men, who thought themselves religious, to do righteousness. 'Let justice,' he cries, 'roll as water, and equity as a perpetual stream.' After him, in the same kingdom, poor *Hosea*, who lived to see its prosperity all destroyed, preached the same lesson in a more winsome voice. He is the prophet of the loving-kindness of the Lord. In the Kingdom of Judah the great *Isaiah*, preacher, poet, reformer, statesman, prophesied for forty years. His message was God's holiness: his policy, to rely unflinchingly, amid all dangers on God. During his ministry the social agitator *Micah*, a man of the people, preached so mightily that he brought about the reformation of Hezekiah (II. K. xviii. 4. See *Jer.* xxvi. 17, sqq.) To what heights of pure religious insight he could rise you may see by reading three verses in his sixth Chapter, 6, 7 and 8, beginning, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?' In Josiah's reign *Nahum* the Elkoshite taught that God's power was not that of a mere tribal god. He was mightier than the mightiest empires of men. As Thebes had fallen, so should proud Nineveh fall, for God, though 'slow to anger, will not at all acquit the wicked.' This theme was taken up by *Zephaniah*, who preached that the judgment of the Lord was a universal judgment: not in cruelty, but in chastening, to bring about a universal redemption. After him came *Habakkuk*, who raises what we call the problem of evil, and solves it by trust in God. God is of purer

eyes than to behold evil: why then does He seem so tolerant of wickedness and oppression? The prophet's mind cannot fathom His ways, but the prophet's faith is invincible, and rises at the end into a triumphant cry, which has called courage back to life in many fainting hearts. The long, sad life of *Jeremiah* is in itself a prophecy to us, though in his day his warnings and exhortations brought him only neglect and persecution. He stood firmly by the great principles of God's righteousness, while an arrogant nation, which had cast them aside, rushed on to ruin. The ruin fell (586 B.C.): in Babylon *Ezekiel* preached to the exiles in a new, mysterious tone, as though he was always oppressed with wonder at the widening vision of God; and the *Prophet of the Consolation*, whose words are joined in our Bible to those of *Isaiah* (Chap xl.-lxvi.), spake as never man spake before: revealed God's righteousness, holiness, tenderness, and the blessing which God's faithful servant finds even in pain, with a force and truth that only one other has surpassed. After the return of the exiles *Haggai*, with his 'Work, for I am with you, saith the Lord,' and *Zechariah*, with his 'Who hath despised the day of small things?' encouraged the first builders of the second Temple; and *Malachi*, the last of 'the latter Prophets,' helped *Nehemiah* to establish the new order, and looked forward by faith to such a summation as we now recognize in the work of Jesus.

Other prophetic books have come

down to us about which we cannot say exactly when they were written. The denunciation which *Obadiah* directs against Edom, for unbrotherly cruelty to Israel, gives him occasion for higher thoughts than those of vengeance. He looks forward to a time when God shall be recognized by all men as King. *Joel's* wonderful poem about the march of the army of locusts rises into the glowing prophecy, 'and it shall come to pass that I, your God, will pour out my spirit on all flesh.' Then there are two very remarkable works which have not even a name, one of which is included in *Isaiah* (xxiv.-xxvii.) and one added to *Zechariah* (ix.-xiv.)

Most of these works, as you see, must have been already in existence at that time, soon after the return, when the Six-book was put together, and before the Jews began to speak of 'the Law' as one Bible in five books. Little by little as years passed away, the same kind of sacredness gathered about them as about the Law itself: until about 200 B.C. even *Malachi*, the latest of them, was looked on as a holy scripture, and the Bible no longer consisted only of the Law, but of the Law and the Prophets.

This process did not cease there. The Old Testament contains other books which the Jews call simply 'the Scriptures.' They are works which, as they grew old, came to be looked on as sacred either because they were religious books, or because they dealt with the history of the sacred people, or because they were thought to have been written

by some sacred personage, such as King Solomon.

There is, for instance, the history of the Jews which was written, not earlier than 300 B.C., by some priest who was not satisfied with the books of Samuel and Kings. He felt sure that certain things could not have happened as they were there set down, so he gave an account of them as he thought they must have happened. His mistake was to suppose that the state of religion which he knew had always existed in Israel; on the contrary, it had only gradually developed. His work has since been divided into four parts, which we know as the first and second books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. There are three books which were originally works of fiction,—tales, as we should say, written with a purpose,—though they were afterwards taken for true history, the books of Ruth, of Esther, and of Daniel. (In much the same way the book of Jonah, which was just a tale, came to be reckoned among the Prophets.) There were several collections of hymns, which we now call the Psalms; and others of wise sayings, which we call the Proverbs. There was a wonderful dramatic poem on the problem of evil, which, with certain later additions, is our book of Job. There is a collection of five elegies, or poems of sadness, which are now called the Lamentations of Jeremiah, though they were not written by that prophet, or by any one man. There is a dreary piece of false philosophy, written, at a

time when the Jews were oppressed by Greek rulers, in the name of Solomon's ghost, but afterwards supposed to have been written by Solomon himself. And, strangest of all, there is an old love-poem, which somehow also came to be ascribed to Solomon, though it was probably written by a Northern Israelite during that time of prosperity when Amos was prophesying.

Some of these 'Scriptures' are not very good books; they crept into the Bible by mistake, and are worlds away in spiritual tone from the best thoughts even in the Old Testament. But some of them, such as certain of the Psalms, are alive with religious thought and feeling so true and deep that every generation since they were written has found help, comfort, and inspiration in their use.

At the time of Jesus Christ this growth of the Bible was still going on. There are some books, written in Greek, which were already looked on as sacred by Jews in Africa, Europe, and Asia Minor who used the Greek language, but had not been accepted by the Jews of Palestine. So it has happened that some Christians, such as the Church of Rome, consider these books as part of the Bible, and others, as the Protestant churches, reject them. They are called the Apocrypha, a Greek name which means 'hidden.' Some of them are very slight, and all together are of less bulk than the Six-book. As we do not print them in our Bible nothing more need here be said about these apochryphal writings.

## IV.—THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Jesus was a Jew, his twelve chief disciples were Jews, the great missionary Paul, who brought Christianity to Europe, was a Jew, and the earliest Christian converts everywhere were Jews. They all possessed and venerated the Jewish Bible about which we have been speaking, and they considered Jesus, as he had considered himself, to be the 'fulfilment,'—that is, the crown and completion,—of those Hebrew Scriptures. So that the Christian Church began with a Bible ready made, which still makes up more than three-quarters of the Christian Bible, and is called the Old Testament.

The early Christians were scattered over all the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, and the only language which they had in common was Greek. Most of them did not even read the Old Testament in Hebrew, but in a Greek translation. In consequence the process of Bible-growth, which went on for about two hundred years among them, was all in the Greek language. Some small part of the New Testament may have been written first in Aramaic, the language of Palestine, but it could not be known and accepted by Christians at large until it was translated; and so our New Testament Scriptures,—the Christian Scriptures which are not shared by the Jews,—are all in Greek.

What are those Scriptures? In the order in which they now stand we

have, first, four short lives of Jesus Christ, which we call the Gospels; a book on 'the Acts of the Apostles,' which is chiefly about Peter and Paul; thirteen letters (or 'epistles') which begin with the word 'Paul,' and profess to have been written by that apostle to the churches or persons after whom they are named; an anonymous essay which ends like a letter, called 'the Epistle to the Hebrews'; seven letters, either to individuals or to Christians generally, each of which bears the name of an apostle,—James, Peter, John, or Jude; and a strange book, whose author calls himself 'John,' describing wonderful visions of heavenly things.

These are not all the books which have been regarded by Christians as sacred Scriptures. The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, the so-called epistle of Barnabas, an allegorical book called 'The Shepherd,' and ascribed to Hermas, as well as other works, have been revered by some churches as part of the Bible. On the other hand, some of our New Testament books were received very slowly and doubtfully into what is called 'the Canon,'—that is, the list of really sacred books. Our oldest manuscript of the New Testament, which was not copied out until more than three hundred years after the crucifixion of Jesus, does not include the letters to Timothy, Titus, or Philemon, nor that strange book of visions, the Revelation.

It cannot, in fact, be said that the

whole Christian Church has ever agreed to accept just those twenty-seven books, and no others, as Biblical. But in the dark ages, as we call them, after Roman civilization had died away and before modern civilization arose, the monks who used to copy out manuscripts of the Scriptures would naturally try to make their work complete by adding, to any copy which did not contain it, any book which they usually found in others; and so, little by little, our list as it is now grew firm and fixed.

The use of these sacred books, which are partly historical, partly theological, partly ethical (dealing with practical morality), is to instruct us in historical facts, to teach us about God, and to guide us in right living. Can we trust them, altogether, in everything? Is every fact which they tell us a true fact? Is every rule they give us a sound rule?

Before answering that, let us ask another question. Are they all, in the strictest sense of the word, genuine? Was 'the Gospel according to Matthew,' for instance, really written by the apostle Matthew? Was 'the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy' really written by the apostle Paul to his friend and convert Timothy? Was 'the Second Epistle of Peter' really written by Simon Peter, the brother of Andrew? To all these questions we have to answer, No. Some of the statements of fact are not true. Some of the rules of conduct are not sound. Some of the books are not genuine. Those which I have mentioned, and

others too, were not written by the men whose names they bear.

This seems at first a disappointing answer. It robs us of an easy and safe guide in religious opinion and in the religious life. If some of the books are not genuine, how are we to know whether any book is genuine or not? If some statements of fact are untrue, how can we tell about any alleged fact in the New Testament whether we are to believe it or not? If some doctrines and rules are unsound, how are we to rely confidently on any of them?

A full solution of these problems has not yet been reached; but we have already learned enough to be sure of one thing, which gives us the utmost encouragement. It is this, that when we have put aside what is certainly spurious or untrue, and selected from the rest what is certainly genuine and true, the unmixed gold which we have washed out is immeasurably more precious than was the mixture, the 'gold-dirt' as a miner would say, from which we have taken it.

There are still many questions, great and small, in answering which New Testament critics do not agree; but much has been decided, and is accepted by all candid lovers of truth. And when we look into that settled result, what do we see?

First, a life of love and work and teaching, which is almost incredibly beautiful, holy, simple, and pure,—the life of Jesus. The nearer we get to the truth of it, the more we fan away the mist of legend which had gathered

round it, the more does the sublime humanity of that life reveal itself: the more clearly does it show us what is meant by sonship to God. First, we have the life of Jesus, and his words of eternal life.

Second, we have the heroic manhood and the masterful writing of his great follower, Paul. We need not seek to share all the thoughts of that impulsive mind; but now and again his whole character comes out for us in such a wonderful passage as that on the grace of love, in I. Cor. xiii., which belongs to the best moral literature of all the world. And in his life we have a sterling example of those active virtues, inspired by perfect devotion, which the world seems at this time to need most.

Third, we have a very instructive view of the way in which religious movements develop: what helps them, what hinders; what they keep, what they lose; what are their opportunities, what their dangers. No religious community which studies that history need be at a loss for methods, or taken unawares by certain perils, or discouraged under persecution or disdain.

And, besides, we have a mass of earnest work, directed towards moral health, which has the worth of all such earnest work, and no more. We should read it with attention and sympathy, but not unquestioningly.

But what can be said, with certainty, about the different books which together yield us this harvest? There are many intricate questions still being

debated about their origin and date, and if we would avoid these, and keep to certainties, only a very general account can be given. We divide the New Testament writings roughly into 'apostolic' and 'sub-apostolic.' The 'apostolic' work was done in the age of the apostles, well before the year 100 A.D. The 'sub-apostolic' writings are those of the next age, when the apostles were all dead,—an age which reaches into the second century after Christ.

Now, to begin with the Epistles, out of the *thirteen* ascribed to Paul, *four* were certainly his, namely, Romans, I. and II. Corinthians, and Galatians. They were letters written by the apostle to the churches, in Rome, Corinth, and Galatia. The epistle to the Romans is an argumentative treatise on the theme that by faith in the Gospel both Jew and Gentile can be saved. That to the Galatians is intended to show that Christianity is free from the Jewish law. The letters to the Corinthians deal with various difficulties which beset a new church in a wicked city. These are, of course, apostolic. *Four more*, I. and II. Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon, seem to be apostolic, and were perhaps written, or partly written, by Paul. They are addressed to the churches in Thessalonica and Philippi, and to a man called Philemon, whose runaway slave, Onesimus, was sent back with the letter. The remaining *five*, Colossians, Ephesians, I. and II. Timothy, and Titus, are sub-apostolic compositions. The first

was written against the Gnostics (an early Christian sect), the rest to establish certain theories about church organisation. If you ask, how came they to bear Paul's name? the only possible reply is,—they were forgeries. But you must not condemn them on that account as altogether fraudulent and worthless. It was a common thing in those days to write in the name and style of a well-known author, and if the imitation was taken for the original, that was regarded as a success in art rather than in deception. And we must make allowance for that ancient idea. This applies, too, to the 'catholic epistles,' those which bear the names of Peter, James, and Jude, none of which seems to be really genuine. But the three epistles of John may have been written by the apostle, the son of Zebedee, and I for one believe that they were his.

The Book of Revelation is certainly sub-apostolic, although some parts of it may be more ancient. Its author's name may have been John, but he was not the apostle. The Acts of the Apostles is a sub-apostolic book, put together by the writer of the third Gospel. But it contains older work, which seems to have been written by a companion of Paul. It is a book which must be very carefully and critically read, and many of its statements are doubtful.

I have left the Gospels until the last, because they are to us the most interesting and important of the New Testament books. The earliest of them was the Gospel according to Mark, which may have been written, as an

ancient testimony records, by Mark 'as the interpreter of Peter.' We are told that Mark wrote down 'all that he remembered'; and that seems to mean that he put in writing, after Peter's death, the substance of what Peter used to teach.

Now you can see, from the beginning of Luke, that there were many accounts of the life and sayings of Jesus written in the early church, and that some at least of these were inaccurate. They were not written by those who had known Jesus, but by men of a later generation, who gathered their information here and there. Two such Gospels we possess, those which bear the names of Matthew and Luke. The writer of each made use of much the same material. Do you remember how C put together J E out of the two histories, J and E? The same thing was done by the writers of both Matthew and Luke with two earlier documents, of which one was the Gospel according to Mark, and the other was a collection of Jesus' sayings which we call the 'Logia.' Most critics believe that this 'Logia' was a work which we hear of as written by the apostle Matthew in Aramaic, and translated into Greek. We are able, by comparing 'Matthew' and 'Luke,' to make out very well what the 'Logia' contained. It may perhaps be called the most precious book in all literature, for it contained Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount.'

Since both the first and the third Gospels are founded on the second these three are much alike. They are

called the 'Synoptic' Gospels, because they seem to take the same point of view.

But the fourth Gospel, that according to John, is very different. What are we to say about that? There is much controversy about this book, and since it cannot be overlooked, I will give you my own opinion. I believe that there was a collection of Jesus' sayings made by the apostle John, in his old age, and that the writer of the fourth Gospel made use of that collection, just as the first and third Gospels made use of the 'Logia' of Matthew. But he wrote in the sub-apostolic age, and mixed very much inferior matter with that precious store.

So you see that of the four Gospels, Mark is possibly an almost apostolic book. The other three are certainly sub-apostolic, but they are all founded on apostolic writings. We are able to sift out those earlier records from the later additions, and in them we find the purest pictures of human life and thought that the world has known.

When the Pharisees blamed Jesus for doing good deeds on the Sabbath, he answered, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.' He knew that he was more truly honouring the day by using it well, than by letting it tie his hands like those of a captive. So we may say about the Bible: it was made for us, not we for it. The sons of man are lords even of the Bible. We do it more true honour by using it for our help in finding truth and learning righteousness, than by raising it

into a master, and enslaving our intellects to it. But, if we would use it aright, we must know what it is; must consider how it grew, and what influences, both good and ill, went to its shaping. We must apply to it the maxim which one of its own books affords,—'Test all things; hold fast that which is good.'

E. W. LUMMIS.

#### A WHITSUNTIDE SONG.

In every Spring the rolling years  
Renew the Springs of old;  
The earth in beauty reappears  
Of green and white and gold!  
It is the time of clearer skies,  
Of softer gales and showers,—  
Arise, O soul of mine, arise,  
And seek the sunny flowers!  
How long, how long, the Winter seem'd,  
How cold and dark and drear;  
But Spring was nearer than we dream'd:  
Arise, for she is here!  
Once more behold each wandering bird  
Turns hither in his flight;  
The warbling choir by day is heard,  
The solo soft by night.  
Within the wild-wood let me kneel,  
I worship meek and true;  
Oh could I sing but half I feel,  
Sweet birds, I'd rival you!  
From Spring to Spring I love the more  
To catch the notes that fall,  
And while I silently adore,  
I share their praises all.  
O Spirit of the beauteous hour,  
Whose breathing, full and free,  
Brings life and charm to bird and flower,  
Bring fairer grace to me;  
And as with ever fresh delight  
From scene to scene I rove,  
Come fill my heart with fancies bright,  
And songs of endless love!

W. G. T.

## Beatitudes.

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**B**EATITUDE is another word for blessedness, and blessedness is spiritual happiness, the highest, purest, and most permanent form of happiness that can possibly be conceived. 'Beatitudes' are therefore sayings which tell us who are the people who are worthy to be called blessed, *i.e.* supremely and eternally happy.

'Beatitudes' abound in the Bible. Amongst the best known are these:—

'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.'

'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.'

'Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy.'

'Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.'

'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.'

But by 'The Beatitudes' we always mean the opening sentences of the Sermon on the Mount. They may be drawn out in this way:—

### BLESSED ARE

1. The poor in Spirit.<sup>1</sup>
2. They that mourn.
3. The meek.
4. They that hunger and thirst after righteousness.
5. The merciful.

<sup>1</sup> The 'poor in Spirit' are those who feel how much they lack, spiritually; or, possibly, those who are voluntarily poor in this world's goods.

6. The pure in heart.
7. The peacemakers.
8. They that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake.

It will be seen at once that these 'Beatitudes' say a great deal more than those already cited. They dare to place happiness where happiness had never before been looked for, or hoped for. Poverty and hunger and thirst imply want; mourning and meekness and persecution imply pain; nevertheless, those who are in want and pain, says Jesus, may well be counted happy, if through want and pain they are spiritually blessed.

But The Beatitudes do not only tell us who are the happy; they tell us also who are the good. They name the qualities which go to the making of the highest conceivable character. Humblemindedness, meekness, desire for goodness, mercifulness, purity of heart, peacefulness are the distinguishing marks of members of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the blessed.

Lastly, The Beatitudes also tell us what this blessedness, this true happiness, is. To be comforted, to be filled, to obtain mercy, to see God, to be called sons of God, is to be blessed.

Here, then, is a theory of Goodness and of Happiness which directly challenges the notions and maxims of the world. It needs study to understand it, and it needs courage to defend it, but it is our privilege as teachers to be called upon to do both. The theory

itself is not denied, nor can any other take its place, but practically, both in private and public life, it is too much ignored.

There are other Benedictions pronounced by Christ, not less precious, though less familiar:—

‘Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.’

‘Blessed are they that hear the word and keep it.’

‘Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.’

‘Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.’

E. P. BARROW.

#### ‘HYMN LESSONS.’

THE infants will never lack a friend while they have an ‘Aunt Amy’ to think of them and work for them. Her latest gift—(we write in November, 1901; but before our volume is published she is likely, for all we know, to give us another, so liberal is she!)—is a set of ‘Hymn Lessons’ for Junior and Infant Classes. She selects eleven of the simplest and most familiar hymns, prints them on wall-sheets, three feet by two, making a twelfth serve for thanksgiving, welcome, and dismissal verses. Next she looks out a dozen good plain pictures, such as childhood loveth, and mounts them on cards, eight inches by six, to be handed round (one each, if possible) to the scholars; and she encourages the teacher to colour them or get the cleverer children to do so. Finally, and above all, she supplies a ‘Note Book’, giving schemes of lessons, with stories, etc., for each sheet; and in a preliminary parable she imparts a luminous ideal of the method of teaching. There is help here for all teachers. For those specially in mind the whole series is simply invaluable.

## The Pearl of Great Price.

### I.—HOW A KING LEARNED ABOUT IT.



HERE was a King once who was unhappy. He had all that money could buy, clothes, palaces, horses, carriages, jewels without number; yet he was unhappy. His crown was his greatest treasure; made of the finest gold, studded all over with the most precious diamonds, it was one of the wonders of the world; yet he was unhappy. For this reason; he found that whenever he gazed on the diamonds and held them close to his eyes, that he might see his own image in the largest of them, his breath suddenly clouded them over, and the image disappeared. Though so priceless, one little breath clouded the most brilliant stones in the world.

This annoyed him vastly; the diamonds, after all, were perhaps only common gems, not worth their cost. He called his court-jeweller, and told him his trouble.

‘I want stones in my crown,’ said he, ‘that will not be clouded by the breath of any boy. I allow no man, whose name cannot remain unclouded by the talk of critics to remain in power in my provinces. I will allow no stone, that can be dulled by mere breath, to remain in my crown.’

‘My lord,’ said the jeweller, ‘There is one gem only—’

'Then where is it?' snapped the King. 'Why is it not in my crown?'

'My lord,' said the jeweller, 'it is only a little white gem, so small, so insignificant that it would escape notice.'

'If,' said the King, 'it be the only gem which will shine though I breathe on it, then, though it be the commonest gem in the world, I will have it for my crown. Where is it?'

The jeweller paused. 'It is hard to obtain, my lord,' he said.

'Nonsense,' snapped the King, 'I have millions of money.'

'Pardon, your highness,' said the jeweller humbly. 'It is no question of money. The jewel is below the sea.'

'I will send for it at once,' said the King, 'What is its name?'

'It is called Pearl, my lord, from its shape, it is like a little pear.'

'I have hundreds already,' roared the King.

'My lord,' the jeweller replied humbly, 'they are imitations, they all cloud over when breathed on. The gem is one easy to imitate.'

The King scowled, for he had received many presents of pearls, and had deemed them real.

'Is it so difficult to choose a true pearl?' he asked at last.

'Not if one is at the Pearl fishery,' was the reply. 'If your Majesty went to the coast and saw the pearls taken from the shell, your Majesty would then obtain the true pearls.'

'Good,' said the King, 'I will go.' But he did not go till a week after,

and then one evening at dusk he walked out of the palace in disguise, for he wished to go alone and unknown. So he set forth to seek the Pearl, the only gem which no breath of suspicion or slander can ever dull,—set forth by himself as indeed is the best way of seeking the treasures of Heaven.

It was early morning when on emerging from a copse he found a shoeless man sitting on the ground examining his foot. The King glanced at him, and the man, not knowing who he was, said in a friendly voice, 'good morning.'

The King disdained to reply, for the man seemed dirty and poor, so he passed on to the cross-roads. Here, however, there was nothing to point out to him the road to the coast. There was only the shoeless man in sight. He turned round, and shouted at him, 'Which way to the coast, you dog?'

The man looked up. 'I am no dog,' he said, and bent again over his foot. The thorn must have been sharp, and the wound sore, for his face twitched with pain, as the King observed. But the latter only repeated impatiently, 'Which way to the coast, don't keep me waiting?' He was unaccustomed to waiting at his palace.

The man was silent for a moment, 'I am sorry,' he said at length, 'I am strange here too. The road to the right is the coast road, I believe, and you turn to the left at a willow-tree—but I am travelling that way myself, and could show you, if you would wait a moment.'

He was still struggling with the thorn, as the King saw.

'Don't be long then,' growled that monarch, without offering to help. It was some few minutes before the stranger rose and hobbled painfully towards him and along the road.

They had travelled some distance, when they found a plot of grass steeped in dew, the drops glistening like diamonds in the morning sun.

'Ah,' said the King, as he saw them, 'there are pearls on land.'

He swept up a handful, but in a moment they had melted. The stranger smiled.

'Those are pearls which do not last,' he said, 'like the glory on earth which men clutch at only to find it vanish in the air. Those are not pearls of great price.'

'Where do you come from,' said the King.

'From a great Kingdom,' was the reply.

'So do I,' said the King.

The stranger smiled again. 'The Kingdom I come from,' he said, 'is not on the earth.'

The King was silent, but shortly afterwards, spying a peacock spreading its beautiful tail and strutting on the lawn in front of a fine house, he watched it admiringly, especially its little beady eyes. At last he said, 'The eyes must be as beautiful as the bird; here at last are pearls—I will kill it and remove its eyes.'

'Someone has saved you the trouble,' said the stranger, pointing to a dead

peacock which lay beneath a bush, 'See, its eyes are only dull after all.'

The King saw he spoke truly, and muttered, 'Another false gem then.'

'Known as vanity, or self-love,' added the stranger.

They walked all day, and towards evening there was a heavy hailstorm. They watched from the shelter of some trees how the hailstones rattled and danced on the open ground beyond. The King thought for a moment that the hailstones were pearls, but as he stepped from under the trees to pick up those which had already fallen others in falling stung him sharply on the face and neck. Those on the ground were melting, and the King laughed in a half-hearted way, and said, 'Those are false also.'

'Hard words, the stings of a waspish tongue,' explained the stranger.

Later the hail changed to rain. The sun even came out and sparkled on the raindrops as they fell, turning them to drops of gold.

'Now those pearls I will have,' said the King, but as soon as they touched the earth they were gone.

'Pearls they are,' said the stranger, 'but they are the pearls of my King—kind words and deeds of love. They do good also when the sun does not bless them as to-day.'

'I should like to have them,' said the King, 'they must be precious.'

'So precious that without them neither you nor the world could survive.'

'Then I will have them,' said the

King. 'If you can obtain them for me —' and then he paused, for he was unaccustomed to ask favours.

The stranger laughed aloud.

'They come from the depths of the sea also,' said he. 'The sun, my King's warm heart, draws these drops of love from the ocean of life leaving behind the bitter salts of selfishness. He stores them in Heaven and so he is able to pour forth a refreshing shower of love just where it is needed.'

The King was silent a moment.

'Can I buy that sun?' he asked at last, 'I have millions of money.'

The stranger shook his head.

'Your sun is within,' he explained. 'Your heart is your sun. Your heart can draw the good from life around you, and pour it forth in love-showers where it is wanted. See here.'

They were close to the edge of the cliffs. A wooden hut stood before them, the door open. The hut was sparingly furnished, and an old dame, very slovenly in dress and appearance, was quarrelling in a harsh voice with a timid little child. At last she lost her temper and struck the child on the head with a pan. The child tried not to cry and turned away.

A stalwart fisherman sat near the table. He said something in a pleasant voice to the old dame, he smiled as he said it—he had a nice smile. The dame, however, turned to face him and poured forth a string of complaints in a shrill cracked voice, which fell on the air like tin tacks on a tray. The fisherman did not answer.

'Faith!' ejaculated the King, 'he should beat her.'

'No,' said the stranger, 'for the child loves her.'

'Her grandmother, I suppose,' said the King.

'No—no relation,' was the reply, 'Her son stole the fisherman's savings three years ago, and ran away to sea leaving her destitute, so the fisherman took her into his home.'

'Where is he going now?' asked the King, for the fisherman after glancing at an oyster shell nailed to the wall passed through the door to the edge of the cliff.

'He is pretending he has had enough tea,' was the reply, 'so that the dame and the child may finish what there is without knowing how hungry he is. There is not food for all.'

'Is he so poor?' murmured the King, 'has he nothing he can sell?'

'He has a small pearl in that oyster shell on the wall,' was the reply, 'but he would not sell that, even if he knew its value, which I dare say he never thinks of. Many sailors round here have them?'

'Why?'

'To remind them that as God puts the most precious gem in the commonest oyster-shell, it is possible for the commonest, roughest men and women to have in their breasts the most precious pearl of all—a loving heart.'

'Hum!' said the King thoughtfully, staring out to sea.

There was a fresh gale blowing, and

the sea ran high—a small schooner had run on the rocks close to the cliffs. She was fast breaking up. The life-boat had gone out, the fisherman whom they had watched was in it. All the fisherfolk were out on the cliffs watching too; for here was a fight with death both on the part of rescuers and saved. The lifeboat was already full of rescued men, when one man was discovered left behind on the schooner. The moon had risen, and the man's face was plainly visible. The lifeboat was putting back when the vessel sank, carrying the man down with it. For a moment his head appeared above the waves, but the lifeboat was some distance away. A sailor in the lifeboat leaped overboard into the boiling sea, and swam strongly to his rescue. He swam hard, fighting death all the way, clutched the drowning man, and dragged him into the boat. Those on the cliff cheered as they saw it, it was a hero's deed.

'That is a fine man,' said the King.

'That and more,' said the stranger. 'It was our fisherman that did the deed, the man we watched just now. The man he saved was the man who robbed him three years ago. The moon fell full on his face, he must have known him at once. Even then he saved him. He has the pearl of great price, a loving heart.'

The King gulped down a breath of salt air, perhaps he was wishing he had been a better King in the past, for he said 'I am sorry I spoke rudely to you at first, and sorry I did not help

you with your foot. I will help that man, if he will let me; he has got what I have not got yet, the only gem which shines steadily through all slander, suspicion and doubt.'

## II.—HOW A QUARREL WAS MADE UP.

Two brothers once lived next door to each other. The elder brother had a fine house and beautiful gardens, and a collie dog, of which he was proud. It seemed as if he only lived for his gardens and for his dog, for he spent his life in trimming flower beds and making kennels for the collie. His brother, however, was a farmer, and owned many fields, especially the long field, which ran up to the hedge on the other side of which were his brother's dog-kennels. This farmer was as proud of his sheep as his brother was of his dog, indeed it seemed as if he cared for nothing but breeding sheep, his whole life was spent in providing for their wants. Indeed he was so afraid of harm coming to them that often and often he asked his brother to put a stout fence round his garden, as well as the hedge, to prevent the dog from scrambling through and chasing the sheep. But the elder brother would have no fence in his garden, because, as he said, it would spoil its appearance. Now, the dog was not only a sheep-chaser, but a sheep-worrier, and as his master let him loose in the night to prowl round the house and protect it from thieves, he scampered off whenever he had a mind and scrambling

through the fence bit, tore and worried the sheep to his heart's content. In the morning what a dreadful sight met the farmer's eyes, sheep lying torn and bleeding all over the field. He came round to his brother's house and complained of the damage done by his dog. The elder brother said he was very sorry, but the dog had to have his freedom at night to keep off the thieves.

'But he has no business to kill all my sheep,' said the farmer.

'I cannot prevent him doing so,' was the reply.

'Then you must chain him up at night.'

'And have thieves in the house for certain if I do.'

'You must pay for the sheep that he kills then.'

'Most certainly not.'

Thus the quarrel commenced, and as long as the dog continued to kill sheep, it lasted and grew more embittered. The farmer at last put barbed wire in the hedge, and this for a time kept the dog at bay. But it also tore his sheep's wool, so at length he took it away. Then he cut up some meat and poisoned the pieces and laid them along under the hedge where he expected the dog would discover and eat them. But his brother in sweeping up leaves discovered them first, and guessing their purpose buried them deep in the part of the garden where the dog was never allowed to go. Thus the quarrel went on, for neither would say he was sorry.

But one day the farmer came round

to complain to his brother in the usual way, and asked him to help him in preserving his sheep; and whilst he was talking, the dog limped slowly across from his kennel on to the grass plot, where his master was sitting. His master, seeing the limp, turned sharply round on his brother and said, 'This is the outcome of some trick of yours, I suppose.'

His brother, however, bent down and lifting the dog's paw examined it carefully. 'It is nothing to do with me,' he said, 'it is only a cut in his paw.'

But it was a straight hard cut, as if it were done on a stone, and the dog was in terrible pain. His master was anxious to ease him, and although there was a pond at the back of the house he took no trouble to fetch water to wash out the wound, and instead bound it up, dirt and all, with his handkerchief. In the night the poor collie got worse, and his paw was inflamed, till at length his master sent for the dog-doctor, and bade him cure the poor beast. The dog-doctor looked at the wound, and then said, 'All this trouble comes from your not washing the dirt out of the wound before binding it up. If you had cleaned it out thoroughly the two sides of the cut would have joined up together. As it is the wound is festered and I shall be bound to cut it all open again and hurt the poor fellow terribly in order to get that dirt out. But it must be done, if ever you wish him to run about as he did. Just hold him perfectly still, will you, please?'

With that he pulled out a knife and slashed the wound open again, whilst the dog howled miserably, for the pain was terrible. But the dirt was removed and the wound re-bound, and in time it was healed.

Of course the dog's master was sorry to see how his carelessness in leaving the dirt in the wound had caused the poor collie to suffer, and of course he was stupid to think that the dirt did not matter. If you are going to cure a wound properly, first you must wash out the dirt and *then* bind it up; for some day that dirt must come out, if the wound is ever to heal. And as he thought, the dog's master felt pretty sure that what he had said at different times to his brother, and what he had let his dog do to the sheep, must have hurt his brother's feelings very badly, just as much as the dirt hurt the dog. And though he excused himself by remembering how many times his own feelings had been hurt by what his brother had said to him and by what he had done in trying to poison his dog, he knew all the while that the quarrel could never be cured, the wound could never be properly healed up, until the harsh things which had been said and done had been washed away.

You know when you want to make friends again after a quarrel, the very first thing you have to say is, 'I am so sorry I said what I did, and I don't think that way of you now.' That is washing out the bad words, which are preventing the wound from healing. Of course if it is a two-sided quarrel,

and the other person has hurt you in the same way, the other person ought to say he is sorry too, but sometimes he won't. Must you still make friends again? Yes, as you cannot wash away the remembrance of the hard words, you must bury the remembrance of those the other person used so deep in your forgetfulness, that you never remember them again. Just as the elder brother buried the poisoned meat, so you must bury the harsh words said of you and the harsh deeds done to you, or the wound can never properly heal. The elder brother became wise, and made up his mind to bring the quarrel to an end. Dogs are not harmful if kept under proper control just as one's tongue is very useful if used in the right way at the right time; so he chained the dog up at night, and let him bark to keep thieves away, and he tried to forget all about the poisoned meat, and who put it in his garden; and after a while he found he had buried it as deeply in his forgetfulness as he had buried it in his ground, and then there was no bad feeling at all left between him and his brother as far as he was concerned. And when his brother saw how deeply he had buried the quarrel, he too buried the remembrance of the injuries he had received, and the whole trouble was thus forgotten and washed away.

Some people are so clever at burying bad deeds and words that often they have time not only to cover up or wash away all the bad thoughts in their own minds and the memory of bad deeds

done to them, but also time to try and bury the troubles other people have. They are like the oyster. The waves wash sand and grit into his shell, as he opens it and his mouth for food, and the sand and grit get stuck on his tender back between it and the shell on the top, so that every time he breathes or moves it scratches his back with its sharp edges and makes him feel sore. How shall he get it away? He has no hands with which to remove it! What can he do? As he cannot wash it away he does the next best thing, he buries it either in his body or in his shell. He squeezes some juice out of his body, perhaps out of his neck as the snail does when he is making his shell, and this juice makes a plaster over the hard bit of sand. This prevents the sand from scratching his back, but why does not the plaster itself scratch his back? Because the oyster makes it smooth and round like a ball, so that it has no edges to scratch with; it looks just like a little hard bead, and it is this little hard bead clinging to the inside of the oyster's shell or found in the oyster's body which we call a pearl. And often it is worth a great deal of money, it is so beautifully made and of such wonderful stuff. But it is only the result of the oyster's attempt at burying the hard-edged sand which is hurting him and may hurt his children.

In the Proverbs (x. 12) you will find King Solomon said, 'Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.' And if we try with our love to

cover up the bad words and deeds which have hurt somebody else, or the bad words and deeds of others which have hurt us, or the many bad things in the world which hurt other people, we may perhaps turn those bad people or bad things into beautiful things like the pearl.

Perhaps by covering up the results of other people's faults, instead of prying into them and telling everyone about them, we may make a bad person's life into a good life after all.

Jesus said the same (Luke vi. 27) 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.' Wash out the remembrance of the wrong they did you, if you can, but if they will not do their part, and will still remember it, then you must bury it so deeply that you will never think of it again. Perchance in time, they will do the same, and the wound will be healed.

The way to obtain a loving heart is to wash all bad thoughts from it, bury all bad recollections, think nothing of your own happiness but everything of the happiness of others, burying their sorrows for them, changing the dry irritating dust of their lives into a pearl.

St. Paul in his long chapter on 'Love,' says (I. Cor. xiii. 5) 'love seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil' and later on 'love never faileth.'

After a while the pearl and the sand, which it covers, grow right into the

shell, and pass gradually through it, as the outer-shell wears away, until at last the sand is pushed out on to the top of the shell and back into the sea and is lost. Just so the more we bury our bad thoughts, and memories, and deeds, the deeper they go, till at last they disappear and are forgotten by all. It is the loving heart that buries them, the pearl of great price, the love we have for other people even when they do wrong. Let us remember the way a loving heart grows: it is only just this, bury your wrong thoughts, bury the wrongs you have done, bury the wrongs done to you, bury all wrongs in the world. Beautiful lives and friendships are left in exchange.

### III.—WHOSE GIFT WAS BEST?

The King—you remember the King who was seeking pearls for his crown—was as good as his word. He said he would help the brave fisherman, who had saved the man who had robbed him three years previously, and he did. But the fisherman would not allow him to help in the way he at first desired, for when offered money the good man refused, and said, ‘Your majesty, you are very kind, but you can help me best by giving your money to the old dame and her son, so that they can buy back the cottage near the wood, where they lived at the time when he ran away to sea.’

So the King did as the fisherman wished, and old Mrs. Brown and her son went back to the cottage which

she had had to leave so suddenly three years before, and the fisherman and his little girl lived on by the sea.

The King’s daughter, the Princess, came to the sea to watch the men fishing for pearls; she, too, wished to have pearls of her own. Pearl fishing is rather dangerous work, for the oysters are far down in the sea, thirteen fathoms or so, and in the seas where most pearl oysters are to be found there are many sharks.

In each of the boats which the King and Princess saw go out a-fishing, there were thirteen men to sail the boat and ten divers. There were many long ropes with heavy stones, forty pounds each in weight, attached to make them sink quickly. These were in the boat, and the five divers who went down first took hold of them and disappeared under water as the heavy stone pulled them down. They were down about a minute, and then up they came bringing the oysters with them. Then the other five divers went down, and brought up more oysters, till the boat was full. Then the men came ashore and emptied the oysters into a heap on the beach, where they were allowed to rot. The smell was terrible, as the men washed out the rotten remains of many oysters, and cut loose any pearls that were found on the insides of the shells, and secured those that had once been embedded in the oyster. This process interested the King and Princess very much, and they bought many pearls to take home to their palace, and it was as they were going home that

they overtook the fisherman's little daughter, who was walking up the road towards the woods with a wicker-work basket on her arm, and her eyes bent on the knitting in her hands. She curtsied as she saw the Princess, for, although she knew not who the royal travellers were, the Princess had a nice kind face and smiled at her, and the child thought she had never seen anyone so beautiful before. The Princess was pleased at the curtsy and said, 'What a pretty basket you have!' The little girl doubted what to say, and shyly hung her head.

'And what have you in it?' continued the Princess, whom the sea air had made hungry.

'Girdle cakes, please,' said the child, lifting the lid to show the beautiful cakes inside.

'May I take one?' asked the Princess, and as the child nodded, she picked one gaily from the basket, and giving a corner of it to the King, ate the remainder with evident enjoyment.

'That is the very best girdle cake I ever tasted,' she said as she finished; 'where did you get them?'

'I made them,' was the timid reply.

'Then you are very clever,' said the Princess; 'and I wish I could make them too, I would always make them.'

The child held out another shyly, but the Princess shook her head.

'I expect,' she said, 'you are taking them to somebody else who likes them, and I must not eat another or I should want to eat all of them.'

'I am taking them to Mrs. Brown,' said the child. They were nearing the old dame's cottage by the wood.

'And are those mittens you are knitting also for Mrs. Brown?' asked the Princess.

'Yes,' said the child, looking down.

'And the basket?'

'Yes.'

'And who made the basket?' asked the King, who saw how cleverly it had been made. 'Your father?'

The little girl still looked at the ground, and coloured up.

The Princess chimed in, 'She made it herself, I'll be bound. Didn't you, pretty?'

And the child nodded her head, but still looked down.

'It took a long while to make, too,' said the King, and the child murmured 'Yes.'

'Mrs. Brown is a very lucky old lady, then,' continued the King. 'You must be very fond of her to make her all these nice things.'

'It is her birthday,' was the reply.

The Princess laughed, rather a sad laugh. 'I am unlucky,' she said; 'You cannot guess, so I will tell you. I have my Christmas Day and birthday both on the same day,' and she pretended to pout.

The little girl said nothing, but as they were now at Mrs. Brown's cottage, she suddenly dropped another curtsy, and turned to go in. But the Princess stopped her, and said seriously, 'When you are old enough, remember, or whenever your father goes to sea

and leaves you long months alone, you must come and make baskets and girdle cakes for me at the King's palace. It is a long way, I know, three days' journey, but it is a straight road all the way. And when you get there, ring at the big gate, and say that I told you to come.'

The little girl's face lit up with pleasure at the thought, for it would be a great day for her when she could live always with this beautiful lady.

'And you must not be afraid if the people at the gate tell you to go away,' said the King with a twinkle in his eye. 'Tell them you have the King's permission to see this lady, and they are to take you to her at once wherever she is, eh, Ina?' and he looked at his daughter.

'Yes,' said the Princess; 'and I shall love to see you whenever you come,' and she suddenly bent down and kissed the little girl on the forehead, and then hurried away up the road with the King. But the child stood looking after her for a long while, her heart all on fire with love.

And when she reached home again she began to make another wicker basket, and it was to be lined with the softest and most beautiful stuff she could find, and there were to be girdle cakes as well, and it should all be a birthday present on Christmas Day for this beautiful lady who lived at the King's palace and was called Ina. She wondered often whether Ina was maid to the Princess or only to one of

the great court ladies; she never thought that the Princess might be like other ladies, or wear ordinary clothes.

But the King was saying to his daughter, as they rode through the forest, attended by six men-at-arms, who had been quartered at a neighbouring town, 'These pearls we have come so far to secure and carry home are worth more to us than all our other treasures, because we have taken more trouble to obtain them.'

The Princess looked doubtful, and so the King explained.

'Nothing is really valuable to you, my dear, unless great trouble has been incurred in obtaining it. That fisher-girl's gift to the old lady is of no more value to us than any other eatable, but to the old lady it will be very precious for the trouble the child has taken in making and bringing it.'

'It seems hard,' said his daughter, 'that with all our riches and power we must take so much trouble to obtain loving hearts, whilst that child and her father each have one already.'

'Perhaps they sought for it earlier than we did,' said the King, 'it is not a thing you can buy,' and they rode on.

It was Christmas Day, and the palace was aglow with light and jollity, for it was the Princess's birthday, and all the great lords and ladies were feasting and dancing in her honour, whilst the central hall was filled with noble youths who had brought her rich

presents and wished to marry her. In the throne room, which opened out of the hall, but was separated from it by a heavily-curtained doorway, the Princess, radiant in jewels and her own beauty, which far outshone the gems, sat on the golden throne, a feather-fan in her right hand, her left arm on the arm of the throne, and a silver shoe sparkling with diamonds peeping from beneath her silver-spangled robe. Very haughty, very regal, very beautiful she looked, a little coronet sparkling on her proud curly head; and the royal youths who had sought in vain to marry her stood to her left biting their moustaches to hide their disappointment. In the distance could be heard the music of the dance, bursting loudly for a moment on all ears as the curtain parted and a fat little man was announced, in whose wake followed servants bearing massive golden jars. These were immensely valuable, as the Princess saw at a glance, and the fat little prince on bended knee kissed her hand and offered them to her as his humble present. She praised them and thanked him, but would not marry him, for she knew that he had in his kingdom so much gold that what he had offered to her had cost him nothing at all, not even trouble, for that had been his servants'. This seemed, therefore, a poor token of his love.

So he joined the group of disappointed lovers at her left hand, and his jars stood to her right amongst many other valuable presents.

The curtain parted again, and a dark-skinned Indian prince was ushered in. He bent himself to the ground many times in crossing the room, touching his forehead with his hands and muttering strange words. His servants followed bearing some beautiful little tables sparkling with precious stones. These stones had been set in the tables in such a manner that when the light fell full upon them they blazed out the name 'Ina.'

Each table must have cost vast sums of money; but the Princess, knowing that the Indian's wealth was so great that his gift, though costly, was yet but a small sacrifice for so rich a man to make, looked on him coldly, thanked him, and bade him go. True, he was not treated so coldly as the fat little prince, for indeed he had sacrificed something to please her; but she was looking for the bearer of a truer love than he had—she was thinking how Jesus had praised not the wealthy men who cast rich gifts into the treasury, but the poor widow who gave all she had (*Luke xxi. 1-5*).

The curtains parted once more, and a broad-shouldered handsome man entered. This was a mighty hunter of great renown, and the Princess glanced at him with admiration, for he was known to be brave and was undoubtedly a fine-looking man. He bore over his shoulders, thinking rightly that she would prefer a lover who brought his own present to her feet, skins of the wildest, fiercest animals in the world, fashioned into rugs and cloaks. No

man but himself had killed so many fierce animals ; the risks he must have incurred were terrible to think of. These dangers, however, he had dared cheerfully, so he said, to bring her presents worthy of her acceptance. He laid them all at her feet.

For a moment she hesitated, for here was a man who had been ready to sacrifice everything for her ; but in that moment she saw his eye glance quickly on all present to see if they admired him for his skill and daring. Then she saw that he had taken these risks not only for love of her, but also for love of his own fair fame, for the praise he would obtain from men for his daring and skill. So she thanked him warmly, for bravely had he served her, though serving his own fame the while, and bade him stand at her left amongst the disappointed.

The curtain parted again, and disclosed a little girl. Dressed in her best frock, a poor stuff gown, and looking like a speck of rust on a bright silver salver, so beautiful was all around her, so homely and travel-stained was she, she stood in the centre of that great polished floor looking timidly at her shoes and clutching in her hand a wicker-work basket, out of the lid of which peeped the corner of a cake. The disappointed lovers smiled at the odd little figure so strangely grotesque in that paradise of splendour ; the courtiers and soldiers sniffed as at the intrusion of some loathsome disease, the lights blazed overhead, and all eyes fastened at once on the fair little

face reddening so pitifully in its sudden confusion.

For a moment there was an odd silence, and the child's eyes filled with tears. She had asked at the gate for a lady named Ina ; she had told them she had the King's permission to come ; they would not believe her. The gate had at first been shut in her face, and though opened later to admit her, had led but to a draughty passage, where she had waited shivering for hours ; till, when half-frozen with cold, magnificent footmen had found her, and jeered as they pushed her upstairs to the hall, where again she had waited. Then suddenly she had been thrust unannounced into this light, this brilliantly lighted room, this paradise of princes, robes and presents, and for very shame her eyes sought the floor, though she felt that her dear lady Ina was somewhere near to her watching. Then as she stood there, her heart beating wildly and her eyes swimming with tears, the thought flew through her head, perhaps after all Ina never meant her to come, perhaps she was not really welcome, perhaps that rich room was no place for a poor fisher-girl ; if that were so, and this was hardest to bear, perhaps she would best please her lady by going back home. With a sob of bitter disappointment she turned sadly away. She took a step towards the door, the floor swimming before her. There was a rustle of silk, and next moment a kind hand was laid on her head, and a pair of blue eyes looked up into her own.

It was the Princess who bent over her, it was the Princess who was saying, almost as if she too were crying, ‘Dearie, don’t go, don’t go! How very, *very* kind of you to come; I am so pleased; and you have made me a basket and some of those delightful girdle cakes for my birthday; and oh, the basket is lined, so beautifully lined. How hard you have worked!’

‘It was to please *you*,’ sobbed the little girl; but the kind arms were round her, and she knew she was safe, for had she not found her dear lady. ‘I didn’t know,’ she whispered, ‘you were so grand—’

‘And I did not know that I had such a friend,’ was the murmured reply; ‘you shall stay here with me, and be my own little maid for ever and ever if you will.’ And she kissed her tenderly twice on the forehead and on the hair, for she felt that the gift which had pleased her the most on this day was the present of this little child; a gift which, because it had been all trouble in making, all trouble and danger in bringing, all sacrifice, bravery, love, was to her the best gift in the world.

#### IV.—BLACK PEARLS AND WHITE PEARLS.

Which is the most valuable, a black or a white pearl? Perhaps you do not know; but if you were offered a necklace of white pearls you would probably prefer it to a necklace of black ones. You would choose it, I dare say, for its

looks, whether it cost more than the other or not. But suppose there were necklaces of yellow pearls, and pink pearls, and blue pearls as well to choose from! I think then you would find that different people would prefer different necklaces, because some would think pink better than blue, or blue better than yellow. But if you were offered a necklace of black pearls or a necklace of bright-coloured beads, I think you would choose the pearls, because, although black is not pretty in a necklace, pearls are at any rate more valuable than beads, which after all are only common glass. Now that is just what happens in some countries in the world where no pearls can be found in their natural state. Take France, for instance. No pearls are found in the sea round the French coasts, and so the French are glad to possess pearls of any colour rather than have no pearls at all, because a pearl is valuable whatever its colour. And a person with a loving heart is valuable whatever colour the person is and whatever may be his or her shape or age—because a loving heart is a pearl wherever it is.

The black pearls come from California in North America, and the white pearls come from India and Ceylon, especially the north-west coast of Ceylon; and I dare say the Californian woman would exchange any number of black pearls for one white one, as there are nothing but black pearls to be found in Californian waters, and I dare say the Cingalese woman would give any num-

ber of white pearls for the one black pearl which would be so rare in Ceylon.

Pink pearls are found in the West Indies, yellow pearls by the Isthmus of Panama, blue pearls round our own coasts ; and, though each is common enough, I dare say, in its own country, in some other country of the world it is uncommon, and therefore valuable ; and in some lands where there are no pearls at all, pearls of all sizes, all colours, all shapes, are as valuable as each other, the smallest as valuable as the biggest, the ugliest as valuable as the prettiest, just because they are all pearls after all. In some places, you know, people with loving hearts are so common that if you have a loving heart too it does not seem as if there were any particular work for you to do ; it seems, indeed, as if there were too many pearls already, and some of them much brighter and much bigger pearls than yourself. Perhaps so ; but there are many places where your special kind of lovingness is rare, and there are many, many places quite close around you where there is no lovingness at all, and in those places all loving hearts of whatever people are all just as valuable as each other, just because they are pearls in a district where no pearls exist.

After all, God made all hearts ; and if He put some in black bodies, and some in white or yellow bodies, or in mishapen invalid bodies, He must have done it for a purpose, and the colour and shape of your body do not prevent you from being just as much one of

His children as is a negro or an Indian. You may be sure you are just as valuable in His sight as any other child of His, as long as you have the true pearl in your body—a loving heart. The pearl is all that matters ; the pearl is just as valuable a jewel in the ugly oyster shell as it is when set in a gold ring, the gem has not changed its character because it has changed its clothes or its home. You are the same boy or girl on a week-day as on Sunday, though on Sunday you do come out in your very best clothes ; at any rate you sleep, eat and drink, just the same—the clothes have not changed you.

Once in an hotel dining-room, where it is necessary to have a clock for the visitors to know the time by, the big clock in the marble-casing on the mantel-piece stopped dead. Something had got out of order in the works, and the manager of the hotel took the works out and put a little 'B' clock into the vacant place. Didn't the little fellow buzz and clack and feel important, for he had been taken out of his common leather case and put into the black marble casing, with gilt edging, and two little statuettes on the top, and this made him proud ! But he kept time just as well as before ; the new home he had been placed in made no difference to his value. He was valuable because he kept accurate time, his case made no difference to the value of his heart.

You will find King Solomon says in his Proverbs (xxii. 2), 'The rich and

poor meet together ; the Lord is the maker of them all.' And Jesus, when he was doing good to those who were in trouble, evidently knew that so long as people had loving hearts they were pleasing God whatever their colour or creed, for he cured sick Jews and also sick foreigners, whom the Jews despised, as we sometimes despise negroes.

There was a servant of a centurion, a captain in the Roman army (and the Jews disliked the Romans because the Romans had conquered them and made them pay tribute to their Emperor), who was very ill and nearly dying. The centurion was fond of the servant, and knowing that Jesus could save his life wished to ask him to come and cure him. He hardly dared to ask, because Jesus was a Jew, and he knew how the Jews must hate the Roman soldiers ; so he got some Jews whom he knew to ask Jesus to come, and they said (*Luke vii. 4*), 'He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him, for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue.' And Jesus went at once to help him, because he saw that the Roman had a loving heart, he cared for his servant and he had helped the Jews ; so he cured the servant, although he was a hated foreigner.

At another time he had travelled to Tyre, on the sea-coast, and there were a great many foreigners there, just as there are in London, where the ships come in. And there was a poor Greek woman, whose little girl was ill, and hearing that Jesus was able to cure

her, she came and fell down at his feet and asked him to make her child well again. And Jesus, wishing to find out whether she really loved her child very dearly, whether she had a loving heart, was at first, as it seemed, rather harsh. He pretended that it was only right for Jews to help Jews, and not for them to help foreigners who were only like dogs. Perhaps this would have frightened most people away, because you know how hard it is to ask for something for somebody else when the person you ask is very rude and snappy to you, as if you were asking for yourself. Of course Jesus was only pretending, for when the woman, whose love for the child was so great that she did not mind how rude he was to her if only he would come and save the child's life, asked him again, he spoke quite kindly to her and cured her child (*Mark vii. 24-30*). You see, all he wished to discover was that the woman had such a loving heart as to think nothing of the hurt to her own feelings and only of the safety of her child. That is the best kind of love, the love of others for which you sacrifice your own wishes, and Jesus wanted to see whether she had this love in her heart. When he found she had, it mattered nothing that she was a foreigner or only a poor woman—she was as worthy to be helped as the richest Jew in the land. Did he not say that all who did the will of God in Heaven should enter the Kingdom of Heaven (*Matt. vii. 21*), and that God would love those who had kept

the commandment ‘love one another’ (*John xiv. 21 and xiii. 34*)?

Therefore, wherever there is one who has a truly loving heart—the heart that makes him love others first and self last with a love that never fails—it matters not whether he be old or young, rich or poor, black, mis-shapen, beautiful, or white, he has the pearl of great price and is doing the will of God.

Nearly one hundred and ten years ago, there was a terrible revolution in Haiti, the French half of the island of St. Domingo, in the West Indies. There were many white Frenchmen, who owned plantations of sugar, cotton, and coffee there, and lived in big houses, whilst their black slaves worked all around. At this time there was a Government in France which passed a law that all the slaves and the white men in Haiti were equal in birth and rights. The white Frenchmen could not believe they were the equals of black men who had been their slaves, so they refused to obey the law. This caused the slaves to fight for their freedom, and they began burning all their masters’ crops and plantations and houses, and killing all the white men, women, and children they met. This was terrible for the whites, for they were so few in numbers, and there was nowhere to go for safety on the island. But on one estate there was one faithful black man. He had been brought from Africa as a slave, and was only a common negro. His master and his master’s family were all massacred by

the slaves before he could interfere, with the exception of two little boys, aged three and five. The brave fellow sacrificed his chance of fighting with the other slaves for his freedom, and risked his life to save these two little white boys. He hid them for a long while till he found a chance to carry them to the coast. Here he put them on board ship, and took them to Carolina, in America. There he worked hard all week to keep himself and them; he put them, when old enough, at a school where they would learn all that was necessary to fit them to grow up to be such gentlemen as their father and his brothers had been. In addition, he gave them each a dollar a week pocket money—all out of his own wages. How the man must have worked, for he provided for them in this way till the eldest boy went to sea, became captain of a ship, married a Spanish heiress, and settled down in Cuba. There he had a large plantation, and the first thing he did was to build a house for the old negro, who had sacrificed so much for him, make him overseer of his estate, and allow him a dollar a week pocket money for the sake of old times. Who shall say that that black African slave, with his loving heart, did not deserve God’s love as much as any white man living?

God would love him, surely, as much as this white man, whose name is not even remembered, although his deed is.

In the summer of 1864, there was a civil war in America,—North against South. The Northern army had taken

a Southern town, Palmyra, in Tennessee, and occupied it. One of the Northern officers had been murdered by some one in the town, and the Northern general arrested ten of the principal townsmen, and ordered them to be shot as a warning to others. One of these condemned men was the father of a large family, and it is hard for a family to live without its bread-winner. A young man, who was unmarried, and whose name we do not know, came out of the crowd and offered to be shot in place of this man, if the general would spare him. The general, who cared nothing so long as ten men of the town were shot as he had ordered, accepted his offer, and the father was set free to win bread for his family, whilst the youth, who had gone out in his place, took his stand against the wall, and died like a man. Surely that youth had a loving heart, the pearl of great price, and surely both he and the old negro, so different in age, colour, and education, have equally pleased God. Surely, also, it is our duty to search for this pearl, to seek for it—for it will not come without trouble—and having obtained it, keep it securely to make the world brighter because of its existence. After all, it is the only gem worth having, the only gem which is not dulled by the breath of suspicion or doubt or decay,—the only gem for which, as Jesus said, in his parable of the merchant seeking goodly pearls, all our best sacrifices may be made (Matt. xiii. 45-46).

A. H. BIGGS.

## An Indian Sunday School.



UR dear friend, the Rev. S. F. Williams, whose self-denying labours in India fitly closed a career filled with good, hoped to tell us something about those children of the East whom British children claim as fellow-subjects of King Edward VII. It was ordered otherwise, and our friend has been called to his rest. But a glimpse of a little group of Sunday scholars in the far away Khasi Hills (in Assam) is afforded by a letter we have received from Mr. Kissor Singh, a native gentleman who has very generously and patiently striven to spread the light of our religion amongst the people there.

At the time he wrote there were four classes in the school. The first consisted of adults, men and women; they were studying the Bible—chiefly the Four Gospels, and, while curiously interested in the different habits of the Jews there depicted, they were impressed with the lessons of morality and spiritual religion which apply to all mankind. The second class was for illiterate women only, who all received very simple teaching from the words and life of Jesus.

Then came the dusky, bright-eyed, and often quick-witted children, their instruction being conveyed largely by questions and answers in a Khasi catechism learned by heart. The 'young and illiterate' children forming the

fourth class had stories told them, and learned the Lord's Prayer as well as a 'Statement of faith in the form of a hymn.'

It binds East and West together in no gratifying way to be told that *teachers are much wanted*, and a very pathetic plea is made for an English missionary to come and live with these simple but earnest Unitarians. When we think of their great difficulties and our many advantages, does it not rebuke any neglect of our opportunities? Whether here or there—

'When the Master calleth  
Let our work be done.'

#### AN EASTER SONG.

As blithely the carols of Easter  
Sing 'Jesus is risen again !'  
The angels are bidding us seek him  
Enthroned in the bosoms of men ;—  
Not far from the souls that have loved him,  
Not gone from the world he held dear ;  
From death and the grave he is risen,  
In life, in the heart, he is here.  
  
Wherever the mantle of pity  
Falls soft o'er a wound or a woe,  
Where murmurs are changed into music  
And gentleness conquers a foe,  
Wherever the warm hand of blessing  
Is stretched to a brother in need,  
Where love wins a life for his kingdom,  
The Master is risen indeed.  
  
Then fling out your banners, rejoicing;  
Bring lilies of Spring to the shrine;  
Ring out, Easter bells, he is risen !  
Sing hail ! to the daybreak divine—  
The light of the love of the Master,  
The pledge of his kingdom and peace,  
Where all the world's sorrow and sighing  
For ever and ever shall cease.

ANON.



THESE outlines are intended to suggest method as much as matter. The scholars thought-of are young, but the lessons admit of obvious extensions to suit older scholars. Very young children would easily pick up the chief facts which form the 'parable' of the whole series; but it would be perilous to attempt much interpretation of symbols in their case. They probably feel by instinct as much of the poetry of their hymns as any 'explanation' could give them. But there comes a stage when, if the task is delicately done, youthful minds may be guided to a perception of the ways in which 'heavenly meanings' get attached to 'earthly stories,' and then they will not appreciate the poetry less from having traced its dawn and progress as here suggested. Let it always be remembered, however, that teaching from hymns is like handling flowers; we must try to lead the mind from the outward forms to the inward thought without dissecting them into unlovely fragments.

#### The Holy City.

##### I.—THE JERUSALEM OF OLD TIMES.

We have just sung (or read) hymn 138 (*Hymns for Children*). It speaks of the 'City of God,' 'God's own Jerusalem'; and about its being *here*—not far away. Let us try to understand that fully; and, first of all, let

us see why we sing about ‘Jerusalem’ in a way that we never do about London, Glasgow, Dublin, New York, or any other city in the world.

1. Well, what is a city? A ‘walled town’? But none of those we have just named have walls. It is a place where a great many people live and do business together. In tents? No; it has permanent buildings—streets of them—dwelling-places, factories, shops, schools, places of worship, and others. Do the people all do just what they like? No; there are rules that have to be obeyed, and governors that look after the well-being of all. (Who are the governors in *our* town?)

2. Where was the city of Jerusalem? ‘Sail’ to it on this map, from a British port, across the Bay of Biscay, along the Mediterranean. Is it there now? Why did I say *was*, then? It is really a very old city; it was old before Jesus lived, 1900 years ago.

3. Is it now very large? Not when compared with our great cities. Let this page stand for the size of London; then modern Jerusalem would be the size of a threepenny bit. (If the page stands for Manchester, Jerusalem would be the size of a somewhat enlarged five-shilling piece.) Only the modern city is more square than round; one of its four sides would measure about two-thirds of a mile (say ‘from the Town Hall to \_\_\_\_\_’). It was considerably larger formerly, but still less than any one of our great cities.

4. How came a city to be there at all? (Show a picture of the site,

with valleys E., S., and W., and another dividing it into W. and E. halves.) The valleys were much deeper and steep-sided at first. Some ancient tribes made a settlement on the hill-tops—just as the Britons did here. The crevices and caverns of the limestone rocks beneath supplied water. Pasture abounded on the slopes. Raiders could be warded off easily. It was thus both a ‘home’ and a ‘fort’ for the clan settled there.

5. What celebrated warrior took it by storm, and made it his own stronghold? King David (II. Sam. v. 6-10). How did he fortify it? Why do we not build walls round our town?

6. Why did it rapidly grow in size and importance? First, the kings of Judah from David onwards lived there. They built themselves palaces and towers for soldiers, and gathered there the richest and cleverest men of the land. Secondly, Jerusalem lay close to the ‘line of trade’ between Egypt (S.W.) and Mesopotamia (N.E.) or Syria (N.). See how traders have flocked to Liverpool and London, and other places where goods can be readily got into and out of the country!

7. Why did the Jews call it a ‘holy’ city? David had the Sacred Ark brought there, and his son Solomon housed it in a Temple. (Show the site of Solomon’s Temple, built about 950 B.C.). They went there for worship, and felt God’s presence there more than anywhere else. (Describe ‘courts’ of Temple and ‘Holy of Holies.’) But it appears that the rocky summit of the

Temple hill was a 'hallowed' spot, in the estimation of the early inhabitants, long before David took the city.

8. Is that Temple there now? Why not? The city was captured 400 years after David's time, and laid in ruins, the first Temple being destroyed with the rest of the great buildings.

Now we know where the old Jerusalem city stood, why it was founded, who fortified it, about what size it was, why it was thought 'holy' by the Jews. We shall next see what happened after the enemy took it from them, 400 years after David,—which was about 600 years before Christ.

[See 'Life in Palestine' for many particulars alluded to. Also see the *Lantern Lectures*, 'Travel and Life in Palestine,' by the Rev. J. T. Sunderland—an invaluable aid.]

## II.—THE JERUSALEM THAT WAS REBUILT.

There is an old hymn, not in our book, which began:—

'When, his salvation bringing,  
To Zion Jesus came,  
The children all stood singing  
"Hosanna!" to his name.'

1. Do you know what this refers to? (*Mark xi. 1-11*). Well, we find the Temple was *rebuilt*, for Jesus here visits it, six hundred years and more after Solomon's building had been destroyed. Do you know who built the Temple that Jesus saw? It was Herod the Great, who, though in many re-

spects a wicked king, did all he could to make his capital city a splendid one. (See 'Life in Palestine,' pp. 70-75.)

2. Was Herod the first restorer of Jerusalem? Oh, no; it did not have to wait all those years for its rebuilding, for, so soon as the Jews could, they set about restoring their ancient capital; and their rulers, Persian and Egyptian, saw the national advantages of the place, and stationed officers there. (See *Nehemiah*.)

3. Was Herod the last restorer of Jerusalem? No; it has often been rebuilt. About forty years after Jesus was crucified, the city was laid in ruins again by the Romans, and still further desolated sixty years later; but the importance of its position being well understood, the Romans restored it, though not as a Jewish city. Indeed, the Jews have never been in possession of it since. It was called by a Roman name, and a temple of Jupiter was erected in it. But in the fourth century a celebrated monarch and his mother restored the old name, and made the city a great place of resort again.

4. Do you know where 'Constantinople' is? It is named after this monarch, Constantine—who, by-the-by, was born, it is said, in York. He was a fine soldier, who became sole Emperor about 320 A.D.; and was the first Emperor who professed Christianity. He, and his mother Helena, were the chief Christian restorers of the city.

5. Why did Christians think so much of Jerusalem? Did they want

to rebuild the Temple? No. But the memory of Jesus was so dear to them that many pilgrims went to the places where he had lived, and they settled and built churches there. And especially they valued the places where he was believed to have died and been buried.

6. Did Constantine make it his capital, as David had done? No; it would not have been so convenient as his city on the Bosphorus. (Where is that?) But, besides erecting churches at the 'holy places,' he strengthened it, and made it an outpost of his empire.

7. Well, do Christians own Jerusalem now? No; it is in the hands of Turkish officials, who are followers of the Arab prophet, Mohammed. The Arabs under one of his generals, Caliph Omar, took Jerusalem in the year 637. But they also, like the Jews and Christians, regarded it as a 'holy' place, and gave it the name 'El Khuds,' = 'The Holy'; and so they did not destroy it, but fortified it afresh, put up a great 'mosque,' or place of worship, on the site of the Temple. It is said that the present city is really the eighth that has been built and rebuilt on the sacred hills of Jerusalem; but those we have mentioned are the most notable to us now.

### III.—THE JERUSALEM THAT WAS FOUGHT FOR.

We have just read hymn 384 (Essex Hall Hymnal)—'Thou Lord of Hosts.' It speaks about 'The Soldiers of the

Cross,' and about fighting to redeem 'The Holy Land.'

1. Did you ever hear of the Crusaders? Why were they so called? They wore a *Cross* as a sign that they were Christians, followers of him who was crucified. It was a badge on their banners, on their shields, and on their shoulders; in fact, they showed it as prominently as they could. (Would it necessarily make them good Christians?)

2. What started the Crusades? It was many years after the Mahomedans had first taken Jerusalem, and in the main they had kept it theirs during four centuries. They allowed Christian travellers to go to see the 'sacred' places; but in those times there was much bitterness of feeling between Christians and the followers of Mohammed, much ignorance, and violence of behaviour. And in 1096, the Turks, an Asiatic people, in the course of their conquests, seized Jerusalem, and their treatment of the pilgrims was most cruel. Travellers came back year by year from Palestine telling how shamefully they had been abused and tortured. At last, in 1093, 'Peter the Hermit' began preaching in one place after another about it, and urging Christians to go and fight to regain the city.

3. What happened? Several vast armies, led by great Norman and other captains, set out for the East. A good many perished on the way. Some who survived proved worthless and feeble-hearted: others were selfish adventurers. But some were simple-hearted,

brave men, who gladly suffered hardships, wounds, and even death itself, in a cause so holy as this was to them.

4. Did they win? Yes; in 1099, the Christian chiefs led their forces into the city, and a new 'King of Jerusalem,' one of the Norman chiefs, was appointed.

5. How long did the new Christian rule last? Only till 1187. The kings and rulers of Christian Europe had more than enough to do to attend to their affairs at home. The Mahomedan faith spread, and fresh tribes who had accepted it pressed upon the Eastern boundaries of Europe. Syria was overrun, and Palestine was once more taken by the Mahomedans who, in spite of later crusading expeditions, have practically held it ever since.

6. Does anyone specially wish to fight for Jerusalem now? No; some Jews would very much like to have their ancient capital restored to them; and some Christians would like to expel the Turks; but there is such comparative liberty for all travellers, and so little to be gained by fighting about who shall rule the city, that a new 'crusade' is never mentioned.

7. Did you ever hear of the 'Crusading Children'? A great host of boys and girls set out among the earlier swarms that tried to regain 'the holy land.' It was a sad failure, and the poor children all perished long before they could get to Palestine. Is there, then, no 'crusade' for children? Not *that* sort; not to win back the *actual* city of Jerusalem. But there *is* a

'city of God' to fight for, as our hymn says; a 'city' to re-build; a 'city,' also, for us to make our pilgrimage towards, every day we live.

#### IV.—THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

1. Do you think it strange when something like this happens?—A family, father, mother and children, have to leave the village where they used to live and where the boys and girls have grown up, and to go far away to live somewhere else. Then as years pass by, they talk about the old home, and remind each other sometimes how pretty it was, and how nice the flowers and plants were in the garden, and how clear the little brook was at the bottom of the fields. And when they sing 'Home, sweet home' they always picture something like *that*. Not exactly like, probably; because we forget some things and easily invent others. At last it is a beautiful sort of *dream* to them, that old house and garden; and if you asked them to describe the kind of home they would like for theirs, they would probably tell you about that 'dream home' of theirs, so very beautiful, and comfortable, and happy.

2. Now do you remember that once, long before Christ was born, the Jews were taken captives by enemies, and forced to go far away from their glorious city? Yes; and they also, like such a family as we have imagined, thought with longing love about their fathers' city, so grand in their estima-

tion; and their old home, so dear to them. They wept sad tears to think they should never see it again. They 'dreamed' about it, and wrote songs about its former beauty. And when they thought of the city they wanted to have as their own, in 'the good time coming,' it was a *glorified* 'Jerusalem' their fancies painted for them.

3. But some of them or their descendants, got back to Palestine, did they not? Yes, they began to rebuild Jerusalem. They did their best, but somehow, they never quite made the new city as glorious as they had 'dreamed' it might be. And then came fresh disasters, one after another till some lost heart altogether, and thought the beautiful new city would *never* get built. But—note this very important thing—some wise men saw and began to tell the rest that the 'dream city,' the glorious and beautiful 'Jerusalem' for which they ought to long and strive, was not one that could be built of stones and bricks, and yet it *could* be built and it *would* be built, by and by. How?

4. One of these wise men put it in this way—(do you know where the book called 'The Revelation' is? Find it. Find Chapter xxi.)—'I saw,' said he, (verse 2) 'the holy city, the *new* Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.' He said this 'new Jerusalem' had a 'jasper wall' with twelve 'foundations,' each of a precious jewel; 'and the twelve gates were twelve pearls . . . . and the street

of the city was pure gold.' What a splendid 'dream city,' especially when, as this writer said, this city was to be inhabited only by 'the glory and honour of all nations,' by the wisest, best, most loving and beautiful-minded people, and nothing ugly and no one bad was to be there.

5. Now you know what parables are. (Who taught by means of them?) Of course you see that this 'golden city' from heaven is a 'parable' with a meaning. No one expects to see a big town come down out of the skies, any more than he expects roses and lilies to drop out of the clouds. The great Maker of flowers does not work that way, but makes the plants *grow* by little and little. And the great Helper of men does not work that way, but helps them to *become better* little by little. And that is how the new 'golden city' is coming from Him into this world.

6. Read hymn 137 (Hymns for Children)—'Have you heard,' etc. Remember what a real city is—how it is meant for good uses—how cared for by good rulers—how attended to by the inhabitants; otherwise all goes to ruin. Do you remember the story of a Greek ruler who showed a foreigner his brave soldiers, and said they were his city 'walls,' and every man a 'brick' in them! If not brave and faithful the soldier would not be part of the city's 'wall.'

7. In building the 'heavenly Jerusalem' what sort of materials are needed? Good lives; wise minds;

healthy, happy, kind, true people. Are all lives like that? Why not? Would it not be grand if they were? Can you help others? But surely your own life must be of the right sort first. There must be a 'city of God' in you.

8. We shall talk of that next time; but now we know that whatever has happened or will happen to the city that was built on the Judaean hills, there is a city that does not belong to one nation only: it belongs to all good people and they belong to it. It has no earthly king; but God, the source of all goodness, rules over it. It is far from finished yet; but it is 'coming,' in every good step forward made by mankind,—and we ought to be its builders. We ought to fight to defend it against all its foes, all false and wicked things, all that makes life bad, and ugly, and shameful. It must be 'holy,' *i.e.*, pure and clean and beautiful for the Spirit Divine, the best of all we can think of, to live there.

#### V.—THE CITY IN THE HEART.

1. 'Over our spirits first, extend thy healing reign.' Where do those words come from? Don't you know the hymn by heart? (*Hymns for Children*, 315, 'Come Kingdom of our God.') Don't you know that the good man, the Rev. John Johns, who wrote it, was our missionary to the poor in Liverpool? Although he went about day after day among the slums and dirty streets he must have had in his

mind a 'dream' like that of the writer of 'Revelation.' He longed for the coming of the heavenly city, the 'Kingdom' that is always obedient to God and therefore always full of light, love, peace, hope, and joy—as his hymn puts it.

2. But note those words '*Over our spirits first.*' Yes, the kingdom must be in men's hearts before it can be set up in their habits and dealings with one another. Read hymn 87 (*Hymns for Children*—'A little Kingdom I possess.') You understand what young Louisa Alcott meant when she wrote that. 'Thoughts and feelings' are the citizens in our heart. Is it easy to 'govern them' ourselves? How can we learn to do it?

3. Look at the third verse—'Dear Father, help me . . . Teach me to lean on Thee.' There is a Helper near, and, if we think of Him and seek His help, the 'city' within us will get built up properly, it will be orderly, and beautiful, and become a true 'holy city'; for He, the Divine Life, will 'dwell in us.'

4. You have heard of John Bunyan who wrote 'The Pilgrim's Progress.' (When did he live? Rather more than two hundred years ago.) He wrote another book, which, like 'Pilgrim's Progress' was a kind of parable. He called it 'The Holy War,' and it tells about a town called 'Mansoul' and how a great king called 'Shaddai' made it for himself, and gave it many precious tokens of his favour. But the inhabitants were of different sorts,—are they

all alike in our town?—And the good people in Mansoul were sometimes overcome by the bad, so that the town revolted to the King's enemy. And the story shows that only after long struggles were the bad citizens killed or subdued, and the King welcomed into the place as into his capital city.

5. You understand that parable,—at least there is no doubt about the town—‘Man’s-soul.’ The King’s name is Hebrew for ‘The Almighty.’ Yes, God is the King against whom bad thoughts are rebels, and when His reign is established in our hearts, we think good things, we drive away mean and unworthy feelings, and give ourselves over to what is right and holy.

6. Do you wish you were quite sure that is so with you? Do not be discouraged by temptation. If you fail, try again. It may be a long struggle to overcome bad habits, but He fights with you. This ‘holy city’ within will be won, by and by.

7. We see what the name ‘Mansoul’ means. No doubt every name has a meaning, though it is often forgotten. (What does our town’s name mean?) Do we know what the name ‘Jerusalem’ means? It *has* a very fine meaning—‘the Foundation of Peace.’ Remember that, when angry feelings rise, when things that can never bring peace try to get possession of your city. When your life is full of peace it will become part of the ‘Foundation of Peace’ upon which the golden city in the world of humanity, the ‘heavenly Jerusalem,’ will be built.

#### VI.—THE CITY THAT LIES BEYOND.

1. We have seen that ‘pilgrims’ often went to Jerusalem. The Hebrews did in old times. See Psalm lxxxiv.—a song of pilgrimage to the Temple. Do you remember Jesus went with his father and mother, when he was a boy? And after he died, and men learned to love his memory, many went to Palestine to see his native land, and especially the place where he died.

2. Now, all could not go,—to *that* city. But they knew they, too, were on a pilgrimage—the pilgrimage of life. They cheered each other by songs like ‘O happy band of pilgrims’ (*Hymns for Children*, 171). They ‘dreamed’ of a ‘Jerusalem the golden,’ not coming down into this world, but where their lives would some time be made perfectly good and perfectly happy—some time, though not in their earthly life.

3. Some people now sing a great deal about *that* ‘dream city,’ forgetting the ‘golden city’ which they ought to be trying to build up in this world, and amongst men here. Some long for ‘heaven,’ but do not understand that saying of a very wise man (Whichcote, seventeenth century)—‘Heaven is first a temper and then a place.’ First, we must be fit for ‘heaven,’ must have heavenly thoughts and feelings; then God will find us the right place to dwell in, with all others who have loved goodness and truth.

4. We are all on that pilgrimage. We *must* go. Can little children keep little? No; they must grow. Can

young people remain young? No; they become older every day. Would it be nice always to keep the same age? Really? And not go on getting more experience and have greater ability and get fuller knowledge of what life means? Would the rose-bush like always to be a tiny plant, and never grow up and bear roses? If God has made us all to be pilgrims, isn't it best to be good and wise travellers, and try to make our journey a happy and successful one?

5. Does anyone know just what that 'holy city that lies beyond' is like? No; men have their sweet and beautiful dreams of it, as young swallows born in England might have dreams of the sunny south; but the reality will surpass all dreams! We simply cannot imagine how glorious it will be. And it will be glorious because it will be good, and full of loving and wise people.

6. We shall all go on from this life, by and by. Shall we *all* get into that 'holy city,' so beautiful and good? What? Can we take any bad thoughts and feelings with us? Wouldn't they spoil it for us and for the others—those splendid dear people, the best friends we ever had, and anybody ever

had—so wise, and kind, and lovable? It would be a shame. It would be wrong; and the King of that city will not allow it. But He is helping us to get ready—and what a welcome He and they will give us, if we really are ready!

7. Read hymn 116 (*Hymns for Children*, 'Looking upward every day.') That is one of the sweet songs of *our* 'pilgrimage.' There are many others—'Onward, Christian soldiers,' 'Forward, children, forward.' You know many, no doubt, and like to sing them. They are excellent march music!

But we must remember those other thoughts about the 'Holy City'; that it is our duty to build up one here. (Read now, 'O thou not made with hands. . . . God's own Jerusalem.' Lesson I.) We must be good Crusaders. (Think of 'Thou Lord of hosts, whose guiding hand.' Lesson III.) And above all, we must welcome the kingdom of heaven into our own hearts and lives. ('Over our spirits first extend thy healing reign.' Lesson V.)

So the Parable of the holy Jerusalem will mean more and more to us as long as we live—here and beyond!

W. G. T.



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